

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, September 2, 1953.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Robert Nicholls) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.**AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION FROM ENGLAND.**

Mr. BROOKMAN—Before the war the late Sir Charles McCann (Agent-General) was in the habit of writing to the Government Produce Department a regular letter upon agricultural and marketing conditions in England, which was released to the press and I believe was published in full in the *Chronicle* and also received notice in other papers. As far as I know that letter was discontinued some time before World War II. and has not been resumed. It would appear to be a good way to get the latest information on agricultural matters quickly from England to this State. Will the Minister representing the Premier see whether the practice can be resumed by someone at South Australia House?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—Yes.

COUNCIL RATING SYSTEM.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—Last week I noticed a press statement that certain parties hoped to introduce a hybrid method of rating to be imposed on local government bodies. Is not this the same method of rating that was pointedly ignored by councils last session and can the Minister of Local Government say who has asked for this change—whether the councils or a centralized organization in Adelaide?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I have not seen the report referred to, but assume the system is along the lines of that suggested by the Local Government Advisory Committee, an expert committee which proposed a kind of conglomerate system. In essence I think there are only two systems, annual values and unimproved values. In between the two there have been many suggestions and every one that I investigated seemed to indicate that in overcoming one anomaly you would create another greater anomaly, and generally that has been the viewpoint of councils. The system referred to was submitted to the various councils throughout the State and the variety of opinion was such that it left confusion worse confounded. Many of them said, "No" and others said "Yes, with reservations"; and some of the reservations ironed out the "Yes,"

so there was no agreement. I think councils will have to adopt one or other of the two recognized systems. I doubt whether there is a third alternative.

REGISTRATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES.

Mr. TRAVERS—In view of prosperity in South Australia being such that the ratio of motor cars to the population is higher here than anywhere else in Australia, and the fact that South Australia's system of car registration is such as to greatly facilitate the ever-increasing fraudulent dealings in stolen cars, and the fact that the South Australian Torrens system of land registration, in vogue since 1886, is almost fraud-proof and that the average car nowadays costs an amount comparable with costs of many farms in 1886, will the Government consider amending motor vehicles legislation to provide for a comparable system of car registration with similar provision for a certificate of title in respect of all registrations effected henceforth, and allowing some period, say three or even five years, for all present owners to apply to bring their existing registrations under the new Act—this latter provision being designed to enable the system to come gradually into operation without seriously upsetting the ordinary routine of the Motor Vehicles Registration Office?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will bring the question before the appropriate Minister.

EMPTY BOTTLES ON ROADWAYS.

Mr. CORCORAN—Has the Minister representing the Premier a reply to the question I asked on August 27 regarding empty bottles discarded on roadways?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The member for Eyre asked a similar question, and I submit the following report from the Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman for the information of both members:—

Section 783 of the Local Government Act prohibits the deposit of noxious or offensive rubbish or substances on streets, roads and public places. Whilst the section does apply to the deposit of fragments of glass it would not extend to the deposit of unbroken bottles unless they contained some noxious or offensive material. However, clause 57 of the Police Offences Bill, which is now before Parliament, prohibits the deposit of rubbish on land without the consent of the owner or the occupier or without lawful excuse. Land is defined to include a street, road or public place as well as private land and rubbish is defined to include, among other things, debris, waste and refuse of any kind. This clause would therefore include the deposit of bottles on road sides.

WAR GRAVES APPEAL FUND.

Mr. Wm. JENKINS—I ask the Minister representing the Treasurer whether this Parliament will make a contribution to the War Graves Appeal Fund, which opened today?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—I will take the matter up with the Treasurer on his return.

EXPORT MEAT PRICES.

Mr. PEARSON—Most producers understand that a general increase in the export meat prices has been agreed upon with the United Kingdom, but so far as I know the actual schedules of prices for the various grades of mutton and lamb have not yet been issued. Has the Government Produce Department prepared those schedules, can the Minister of Agriculture indicate the likely intake of lambs at the Port Lincoln freezers, and what arrangements are being made for slaughter during this season?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—An agreement has been made with the United Kingdom in regard to meat prices for this year, but as far as I am aware the details have not yet been made available to us. A schedule has to be worked out by the Meat Board, which advises the Government Produce Department of it. I understand the board has been considering a schedule and I will ask that it be made available as early as possible to the people concerned so that they can be well informed on the prices they can expect for their livestock. As regards the second question, I will communicate with the general manager of the Produce Department to ascertain the position concerning the Port Lincoln freezers and advise the honourable member.

ACCESS ROAD TO AIRPORT.

Mr. FRED WALSH—Residents in the Cowandilla and Brooklyn Park areas are concerned about the second road leading to the new airport near West Beach. Can the Minister of Works say whether the department has any plans in regard to that matter and, if so, can he outline them to the House?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—The honourable member was courteous enough to indicate that he would ask this question and accordingly I have a reply from the Commissioner of Highways, which states:—

Until this future scheme can be put in hand it is undesirable to construct Burbridge Road as it is intended to close the section immediately west of Marion Road and any construction done on this length would be wasted. Negotiations for the acquisition of the necessary land are now nearing completion.

Preliminary plans have been completed for the road construction which will involve the immediate demolition of a good-class occupied stone and brick residence. In view of the present housing position, it is considered that demolition should be deferred until the airport is actually opened and traffic has developed sufficiently to warrant construction of the new road. In the meantime, construction of the access road from Henley Beach Road is in hand and access from Marion Road to the airport can be obtained via Lipsett and Marshall Terraces, with little inconvenience to traffic. If the honourable member has any further representations I shall be glad if he will follow them through, and I will get further information thereon.

COUNTRY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

Mr. WHITE—I understand that some years ago a sum of about £1,000,000 was allotted to assist the Electricity Trust to transmit electricity to sparsely-populated areas. Is any of that sum left, do localities need certain qualifications to get any of it, and what is the procedure to obtain assistance?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—It has always been the policy of the Electricity Trust to take power to sparsely-populated areas wherever possible. If the honourable member has any particular locality in mind, and will be good enough to let me know where it is, I shall be glad to take up the question with the Treasurer.

EIGHT MILE CREEK AREA.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—The son of one of my Victor Harbour constituents is a settler on the Eight Mile Creek area in the South-East. He wishes to irrigate his block in the summer by pumping water from the drains, but is not allowed to do so. Can the Minister of Lands tell me whether this is correct and, if so, the reason?

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS—The honourable member indicated yesterday that he would ask this question today, but it seems peculiar because at the moment, as I am sure the member for Mount Gambier will agree, the Eight Mile Creek area is over-irrigated: all the land is under irrigation. The department actually encourages irrigation in the dry period of the year, which indicates that it has to be very careful not to over-drain the land. Mr. Rowland Hill, Chief Executive Officer of the Lands Development Executive, reports:—

The honourable member has not explained who the particular settler is, but one of the early settlers, a Mr. Humphries, has carried out some sprinkler irrigation on his block. Where water is being pumped from the drain reserves

it will be necessary for settlers to obtain permission in order to prevent the drains being fouled by protruding pipes. The executive would encourage summer irrigation, but such irrigation must be under control to prevent one settler flooding his neighbour with surplus water, and the pipes must not obstruct the drains. If the settler concerned makes formal application to use drain water for irrigation, his request will be granted provided he is prepared to comply with the precautionary measures referred to.

BRAN AND POLLARD SUPPLIES.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—Pig producers find themselves in a desperate position owing to the shortage of bran and pollard. One producer I know keeps 450 pigs and uses about two tons of pollard weekly. There are others like him in my district, and they are at present unable to purchase mill offal. In some cases firms will let them have a bag of pollard if they buy as well a bag of stock feed at 38s. a bag. The disparity in cost is too great and it is uneconomic to the producers. Can the Minister of Agriculture tell me whether every avenue for the export of flour is being exploited in order to keep our mills open and working? Is too much stock feed being made at the expense of production of bran and pollard?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—Following on the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition last week I communicated with the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture and am now awaiting his reply. I am aware that there is a considerable shortage of bran and pollard here, which fact has been brought under the notice of the Commonwealth Minister. I am aware also that whilst one or more mills are working three shifts a number have closed down, thus creating a serious position in regard to bran and pollard. When I get a reply from the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture I will bring it down to the House.

SHOW WEEK ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. C. S. HINCKS, for the Hon. T. Playford, moved—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, September 15, at 2 o'clock.

Motion carried.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 26. Page 527.)

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I support the Bill so ably explained by the Leader of the Opposition and ably supported by Mr. John Clark.

I listened intently to their speeches, and also the remarks made by the Premier, who is frequently referred to as Atomic Tom and also as Bouncing Tommy. As usual, he bounced all over the place without touching the Bill. He spent considerable time talking about the United Nations, and following on an interjection by the Leader of the Opposition he accused Mr. O'Halloran of having referred to the United Nations in his opening remarks. I have read those remarks and there is not one reference in them to the United Nations. That was one accusation made by the Premier which misfired, but, as usual, he went on his way unperturbed. He is one of the most able debaters in this place and can discuss political matters generally, but when proposals are put forward by the Opposition to amend the Electoral Act or Constitution Act, to provide a true democracy and give the electors the right to elect the Government they want, the Premier is unable to discuss the matter on its merits: he has to throw out smoke screens and make accusations against members of the Opposition. That was the sum total of his address on this occasion. Last year he spent much time criticizing the Opposition for attempting to amend both the Electoral and Constitution Acts at the one time. He said he did not think it was desirable. Then he said that if the Government were faced with the same problem he thought the same thing would be done. This year he spent some time accusing the Opposition of wanting to abolish the Legislative Council, but that matter is not mentioned in the Bill; it was another smoke screen. To cap his effort, he set out to destroy his own argument by trying to prove that where Labor has been in office in Australia and had the opportunity to abolish either the Senate or the Upper House it had not done so, except in Queensland. He said that the Commonwealth Labor Government had set up an advisory council in the Northern Territory, but that was not mentioned in the Bill.

He also attempted to make capital out of his view that there would be under the present Bill 25 metropolitan seats and 20 country seats. I do not know how he arrived at that view, but that is how he summed up the position. He said something else that was totally wrong. As reported on page 518 of *Hansard* he said:—

Do members opposite know what is provided in the Bill? Mr. O'Halloran says it does not say that there will be four districts in the country and five in the city but Mr. Lawn said, "What is wrong with that?"

I did not say that. I said, "If a fair distribution results in that what would be wrong with that?" The Bill appoints a committee consisting of two persons, against whom no accusation of bias can be levelled, and a third person appointed by the Government to make an independent report. I am not concerned about how many seats the metropolitan area or country will get. We are here to represent the State as a whole. A city member should not say that he will not agree to something because it will favour the country and not part of the metropolitan area. We are bigger than that; otherwise we should not be here. The Premier is wrong in making the assumption he did. I believe that the independent committee would recommend some districts which would be part metropolitan and part country. Perhaps some of our districts in the northern and southern parts of the metropolitan area would be linked with country districts. The principles of the Bill are in accord with the principles of democracy, and that is the matter we should consider, not our personal gains. The Premier also said that in Queensland there are 51 country seats and 24 metropolitan seats. The Leader of the Opposition asked him to give the population figures for the metropolitan and country areas, but he did not do so, and obviously for a good reason. The Queensland Labor Government has done something about decentralization instead of merely talking about it. Country electors in that State total 438,099, and metropolitan 299,480.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—In Queensland, 10 seats with an average of 4,613 electors are held by Labor, and the State gave a majority of about 33,000 votes to Liberal candidates. The small seats are held by Labor.

Mr. LAWN—I have heard previous reference to gerrymandering in Queensland. I consider it is wrong to have a gerrymander, whichever Party is in power. I was interested in statements made by the Premier in the last three years on this subject and I watched the results of the last Queensland State election with interest. I then wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer in Queensland, and later I shall give the figures of that election and let the House decide whether there was gerrymandering. The Premier did not suggest that there was on this occasion, but camouflaged the position by saying that in Queensland there were 51 country seats and 24 metropolitan seats. Another statement of the Premier was that we must consider the ultimate result

of the proposed system. Obviously what he had in mind was what will be the ultimate result on the seats held by the Liberal Party. Honourable members opposite were not elected to represent cattle and sheep, but human beings. We on this side are considering the human aspect.

Mr. Dunstan—Members opposite are not interested in representing the people.

Mr. LAWN—We know that. They represent vested interests, parrots and galahs.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member not to reflect on honourable members.

Mr. LAWN—To understand the electoral set-up in this State one should study our Parliamentary history and that is how I have approached this subject. I find that our Parliament as we know it today has existed since 1857. At that time there was no Labor Party and it was only because the Liberal Governments in the nineteenth century refused to pass what might be called Labor legislation dealing with such subjects as a minimum working week, payment for holidays, sick leave, annual leave, long service leave and workmen's compensation, that the Australian Labor Party was born in South Australia in 1893.

Mr. Geoffrey Clarke—The Liberal Party in England during the last century introduced great reforms in factories.

Mr. LAWN—That Party banished many people to this country because they attempted to form a union, or shot a rabbit, and prior to that even hanged people for such offences, and that is the Party of which the honourable member boasts. It did not take the Labor Party in South Australia long to come into office as the Government. The first Labor Government was the Price Ministry which took over on July 26, 1905, and remained in office until June 5, 1909. The Verran Ministry governed from June 3, 1910, until February 17, 1912, the Crawford Vaughan Ministry from April 3, 1915, to July 14, 1917, the Gunn Government from April 16, 1924, to August 28, 1926, the Hill Government from August 28, 1926, to April 8, 1927, and again from April 17, 1930, to February 13, 1933, and the Richards Government from February 13 to April 18, 1933.

Mr. Pearson—So apparently it is possible to have a Labor Government in this State.

Mr. LAWN—You mean it was possible. I will give reasons why it is not possible today.

We have the Legislative Council doing a good job for the Liberal Party and vested interests. We find that from just after the turn of the century up to April, 1933, Labor had been in office for approximately 14 years. The Liberal Party had in mind that the Labor Party had held office from 1924 to 1927, whereas the Liberals held office from 1927 to 1930, the Labor Government again coming back into office from 1930 to 1933, so when the Butler Government was returned in 1933 it said, "We cannot have this state of affairs existing in South Australia. We do not want this rotation of Liberal and Labor Governments. We will see that the Labor Party does not get into office in 1936; we will extend the life of this Parliament to five years, thereby giving us an extra two years in office."

Mr. Dunks—That Liberal Government said it would do that as part of its policy.

Mr. LAWN—It went further; it introduced a Bill in 1936 known as the "Save Our Seats Bill," which led to the gerrymandering of the electorates. Its object was to ensure the continuance of Liberal Party Governments. Many years ago a Liberal Party Premier said that a redistribution of seats would keep the Labor Party out of office for 30 years, but he misfired. The same thought was in the mind of the Liberal Party Premier in 1936. He said South Australia should have stable government, so the Electoral and Constitution Acts were amended to see we got stable government, meaning a succession of Liberal Party Governments for years. Our present Premier has told us much about stable government when speaking on Bills similar to that now before the House. However, no electoral system is just if it is designed to keep one political Party in power. The Leader of the Opposition said yesterday that the people should have the right to change the Government if they so desire. We believe in that principle. Although I urge people to always vote for Labor Party candidates, I admit that many people say, "Let us have a change of Government occasionally," for they like to put one Party in office for one term and then have a change. They consider the people are better off as the result of changes of Government.

Mr. Dunks—It takes longer to get the Liberals out.

Mr. LAWN—Yes, because of the gerrymander. I was interested in a report placed before the House by the Attorney-General in

1936 concerning the proposed new districts and the number of electors in them. I have prepared a table of the electors on the rolls in 1936, the metropolitan and country seats quota, and the electors on the rolls at the March, 1953, elections. I seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without reading it.

Leave granted.

Number of Electors on Roll per Report of Committee of 1936; Together with Metropolitan and Country Quotas and 20 per cent Variations, and Electors on Roll, General Elections, March 7, 1953.

Country Districts (26). Quota, 5,718; 20 per cent above quota, 6,862; 20 per cent below quota, 4,574.

	1936.	1953.
Albert	5,250	6,100
†Alexandra	6,281	8,255
Angas	5,681	6,358
*Burra	5,094	4,338
†Chaffey	5,537	7,363
Eyre	6,032	5,084
†Flinders	5,578	7,462
*Frome	4,219	3,645
Gawler	5,533	6,232
Gouger	5,343	6,585
Gumeracha	5,650	6,422
Light	6,257	5,432
†Mount Gambier	6,456	8,876
†Murray	6,108	7,113
*Newcastle	4,932	4,008
†Onkaparinga	6,349	7,990
†Port Pirie	6,803	8,534
Ridley	6,247	6,117
Rocky River	5,333	4,692
Stanley	5,986	5,034
†Stirling	5,396	7,003
†Stuart	4,923	10,810
†Victoria	6,400	10,279
Wallaroo	6,034	5,355
Yorke Peninsula	6,461	6,409
*Young	4,791	4,212

Total 148,674 169,708

Metropolitan Districts (13). Quota, 15,665; 20 per cent above quota, 18,798; 20 per cent below quota, 12,532.

	1936.	1953.
Adelaide	14,560	12,111
†Burnside	15,130	20,703
†Glenelg	14,801	27,118
†Goodwood	14,298	25,693
†Hindmarsh	16,883	23,089
†Mitcham	14,638	20,226
Norwood	16,013	17,556
†Port Adelaide	16,370	30,230
†Prospect	16,141	23,465
†Semaphore	14,246	24,104
†Thebarton	15,548	19,396
Torrens	18,131	17,952
Unley	16,888	17,340

Total 203,647 278,985

* Indicates dropped below lowest quota.

† Indicates increased above highest quota.

Mr. LAWN—The committee's report indicated that the Government of the day had

determined that there should be 39 electorates for the House of Assembly, that they should be single electorates, and that there should be 26 country seats compared with 13 metropolitan, and then it asked the committee to define 26 country and 13 metropolitan electorates. It is not clear whether the Government submitted an actual plan of the districts to the committee, which divided the total country electors by 26 to get an average of 5,718. Following the Commonwealth practice, it allowed a 20 per cent variation above or below that average, the maximum being 6,862 and the minimum 4,574. The average for the metropolitan seats was 15,665. I am sure the member for Port Adelaide would be pleased if he had only that number of constituents in his district. The maximum for metropolitan districts was 18,798 and the minimum 12,532. My table tells a remarkable story. I have put an asterisk against the four districts which have dropped below the quota—Burra, Newcastle, Young and Frome. Actually, Frome was outside the minimum at the time the committee framed its report in 1936. There is another story. I placed a dagger alongside those districts where the number of electors on the roll today is above the highest quota, and it gave me 19 seats, nine of which are in the metropolitan area. In 1936 the country electors on the roll totalled 148,674, and the metropolitan electors totalled 203,647, about 55,000 more than in the country. Today there are 169,708 in the country and 278,985 in the metropolitan area, about 109,000 more than in the country. In 1936 the committee fixed a quota of 15,665, and if the 54,000 additional people now in the metropolitan area were taken into account, there would be four more seats in the city. The Government and its supporters cannot avoid doing something in regard to electoral reform, unless they want to act as dictators. In 1936 the committee gave the number of electors in Port Adelaide district as 16,370; today it is 30,230.

Since I have been a member of this House the Premier has always tried to upset proposals put forward by the Opposition by making comparisons with other States, and today I intend

to make some comparisons in that way. Since last December all States except Tasmania have had elections, so I wrote to the Chief Returning Officer in each State for information about the first primary votes cast for the various parties. This week a booklet entitled *Facts and Figures* was circulated to members. It contains some of these election results, but in some instances the figures differ from those I obtained from the Chief Returning Officers. In the Victorian elections held on December 6, 1952, Australian Labor Party candidates polled 500,070 primary votes, Liberal and Country League candidates 288,759, Independents 42,861, Electoral Reform League 59,069, Communists 12,670, Progressive Labor 20,090, Unendorsed Liberal 3,439, Henry George Group 2,765, Proportional Representation League 1,372, and Country Party 85,843. The total first primary votes received by the Australian Labor Party candidates was 500,070, and all other parties, including Progressive Labor, received 516,868. Although Labor received slightly less than 50 per cent of the primary votes, it was able to govern. At the Western Australian elections held on February 14, 1953, the primary votes cast for Australian Labor Party candidates totalled 94,021, A.P.A. group 996, Country Party 5,991, Communists 2,022 Independents 7,326, Independent Liberal 592, Liberal 2,984, and Liberal and Country League 74,630. The Australian Labor Party candidates received 94,021 primary votes and all other groups 94,541, a majority for the "all-others" of 520, yet Labor was returned to govern. That could not happen here. In New South Wales elections were also held on February 14, and primary votes were as follows:—A.L.P. 852,276; Liberal Party 432,739; Country Party 179,671; Lang Labor Party 7,406; Independent Labor Party 16,533; Communist Party 21,421 and Independent Party 38,822. In this instance I have grouped all the parties other than the Labor Party and we find that Labor polled 852,276 as against the "all-others" of 696,592, a majority for Labor of 155,684. In Queensland we find the following results from the election held on March 7, 1953:—

[illegible]

How can it be claimed that there was a gerrymander in Queensland when more than 50 per cent of the votes were for the Labor Party?

It all depends on how we interpret the word "gerrymander." Possibly the Premier has in mind the set-up in South Australia. His Party has been kept in office so long that it is considered a good electoral system from the Liberal point of view and that any other system which gives the right to the majority of the people to govern themselves is a gerrymander. That is what we call democracy and that is what the Opposition wants. The Liberal Party contends that it is misleading to say that a greater number of electors in South Australia voted for the Labor Party because in certain uncontested seats it was not possible to say what would be the number of Liberal voters. It is implied that in a district like Adelaide, where the Liberal Party does not run a candidate, the Liberal vote is unknown. That is an attempt to cloud the issue. During the Address in Reply debate I stated that the Liberal Party attempted to influence its supporters to vote for the Communist Party candidate against the Labor Party candidate. Let us consider what happened in the Adelaide district at the last State election and Senate election. The number of votes for the Labor Party candidates in the Senate election was 7,083 for the Liberal Party candidates 2,048, for the Communist Party candidates 214, and for the Independent candidates 45. At the State election in March there was no Liberal candidate for Adelaide and on that occasion the Communist Party candidate received 1,093 votes as against 214 for the Senate election. It is obvious that at the State election the Communist Party candidate received a certain number of Liberal votes. I am refuting the suggestion made both inside and outside this House that where a district is uncontested by the Liberal Party it is not possible to ascertain the Liberal strength in that district, and that the vote gives a false picture of the position. The people should have a fair and just electoral system, giving them the right to elect the Government of their own choice. Why should a doctor, clergyman, worker, or business man in the country have a vote two or three times the value of a person in the same category in the metropolitan area? At the last State election in March Australian Labor Party candidates received 166,526 primary votes, the Communist Party 4,824, the Liberal and Country League 119,003, and Independents 36,271. Grouping all parties other than the Labor Party together the position is that Labor

received 166,526 and "all others" 160,098, a majority for the Labor candidates of 6,428, yet we come here with 14 members in a House of 39. That is a damnable disgrace to the history of South Australia. The results of elections in New South Wales and Queensland disclose overall majorities for Australian Labor Party candidates, and the Labor Party got into office in those States. In Victoria and Western Australia the Labor Party candidates received slightly less than 50 per cent of the total primary votes, yet Labor Governments were elected. On the other hand, in South Australia the Labor Party candidates polled over 50 per cent of all primary votes, but they constitute only one-third of the members of this House. I challenge members opposite to justify that state of affairs. Many people who would like to remain loyal to the Liberal Party cannot understand how it is possible that, when the majority of people vote for any political Party, it cannot get more than one-third of the seats in Parliament. One of my colleagues will probably tell the House that members opposite tried to explain this problem by letter.

The recent Senate election was held about two months after our State election. Liberal Party candidates polled 189,105 votes, Communist Party 4,903, Labor Party 219,628, and Independents 2,650. The overall majority for Labor Party candidates was 23,015, and three of them were elected, and two Liberal Party. That was a result of proportional representation. But for proportional representation, the Labor Party would have five Senators representing South Australia, but, believing that any substantial section of the people should have representation, a Commonwealth Labor Government legislated for proportional representation for Senate elections. On one occasion there were only three Liberal Party senators elected. What a farce that was! Obviously, there were very many Liberal Party supporters, and the Commonwealth Labor Government gave them the right to have adequate representation. An extract from the report of the committee which framed the electoral boundaries in 1936 states:—

The distribution of the State into 13 metropolitan districts and 26 extra-metropolitan districts each with a number of electors closely approximating its respective quota, has not been an easy task as it was deemed necessary that the following factors should receive due consideration:—

- (a) Existing State and Commonwealth subdivision boundaries as well as existing Commonwealth division boundaries. It is obviously desirable to minimize as far as possible any alteration to the

existing subdivision boundaries, so as to avoid confusion in the minds of electors at polling time.

- (b) Lines of communication. The conduct of elections, as well as the interests of the electors, requires to be considered from this point of view.
- (c) The possibility of a future increase or decrease in the number of electors in any district.

That shows the committee took into consideration a very vital fact—"the possibility of a future increase or decrease in the number of electors in any district." The table I prepared shows that 19 districts now exceed 20 per cent above the quota fixed in 1936. It also shows that the number of electors in four districts has fallen below the limit. The movement of population has been such that members opposite must support the Bill. I appeal to the gritless wonders on the other side of the House to consider it on its merits.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member must not reflect on the members of the House, and I ask him to withdraw his remark.

Mr. LAWN—If it is a reflection it is a reflection on members opposite, and they made no objection.

The SPEAKER—It offends in two directions—it is offensive language under the Standing Orders and it is a reflection on members. Therefore, I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. LAWN—In view of that, I withdraw. I say to members opposite that the present system has resulted in a dictatorship, and will maintain that dictatorship, so if there is any just and fair-thinking member opposite I ask him to at least agree to the second reading. I do not say that members opposite have to agree to the Bill in its entirety, for I do not attempt to thrust all my beliefs down another person's neck. I am open to correction if I am wrong in any of my statements or beliefs, but the Labor Party has put a proposal to this House that it believes to be fair and just. The great principle in the Bill is to give the people an electoral system to permit them to elect the Government of their choice. That is far greater than any question of proportional representation or multiple electorates. We believe the Bill provides the best system of elections, and if the Government supporters throw it out at the second reading they cannot claim they are true democrats.

Mr. Davis—Don't you know the master has spoken?

Mr. LAWN—We were told that by the member for Alexandra yesterday, but I still have hopes. Without hope life would not be worth living, and surely there is sufficient wisdom and belief in democratic principles amongst members opposite to bring pressure to bear on the Government. I notice that a Liberal Party convention is to be held next week, and there is an item on the agenda from more than one sub-branch asking for electoral reform.

The Hon. Sir George Jenkins—Would you like to address them on that question?

Mr. LAWN—Yes, but I shall be attending an important conference next week. If the Bill does not pass the second reading, at least I can hope that something may arise from the Liberal Party convention to force the master—if that is possible—to retract what he said about the Bill. I believe a case has been made out for at least four more metropolitan seats. The measure must pass the second reading, otherwise members opposite cannot claim that they truly represent the people of this State. At present the Government does not represent the people. In March last it was sacked. Liberal Party members believe that the employer has the right to sack an employee. I say the people have the right to elect or sack a Government. There is much in the contention that it is good to change the Government, but under present conditions the electors have not that right.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—Before dealing with the Bill in detail I want to refer to some remarks made by Mr. Lawn today. He said that the Liberal Party was not responsible for any social reforms in the 19th century and that the world had to wait for the birth of the Labor Party before democracy was really achieved. I have no history reference book before me, but offhand I can call to mind some very notable social developments which occurred under Liberal Governments in Great Britain during the 19th century. I remind the honourable member that social conscience on these matters was neither as widely developed nor as enlightened as it is today. Therefore, it is greatly to the credit of the Liberal Party in those days when the reforms were introduced. Even those who suffered from the harsh conditions of the time—and they were harsh—did not appreciate that anything else was their lot. Social conscience was not developed as it is today, yet the Liberal Party in the 19th century abolished slavery, setting a standard for the whole world,

abolished rotten boroughs, widened the franchise, introduced penny postage, abolished transportation of criminals, abolished the prohibition against assemblies which stood in the way of the formation of trade unions, introduced factory legislation dealing with the employment of women and children, and above all kept the peace of the world. That is an amazing category of social reform at a time when the social conscience was not aroused to the need for such reform.

Mr. Lawn referred to Queensland. I have had the experience of travelling over the whole of Queensland from Brisbane to the tip of Cape Yorke, a rather unusual experience. I would say that the decentralization which has taken place in that State has occurred in spite of the presence of Labor Governments, and because of the favourable natural conditions available. Queensland has a long sea coast, high rainfall areas, numerous harbours, and a rich hinterland. When one travels in Queensland one does not find the air of contentment which is supposed to exist as the result of decentralization brought about by a paternal Labor Government, because the farther north one goes the more one finds antagonism towards people in the south. Queensland will never reach economic maturity until the area is divided into two or perhaps three States. The lack of community interest between north Queensland and Brisbane is far greater than the lack of community interest between Victoria and South Australia.

Mr. John Clark—That might happen under any Government.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—Yes, but it is accentuated under the Labor Government. There seems to be a mistake in the title of the Bill. I think it should be "A Bill for an Act to provide a substitute for an acceptable electoral policy," because that is what the Bill sets out to do. It seeks to achieve for the Labor Party a victory at the polls which their policy does not warrant. It is remarkable to find the limits to which some people will go to discredit the achievements of the Liberal Party in this State, and to so distort figures that a completely wrong view is established, not only in Australia, but overseas, with regard to the electoral position in South Australia. I have before me *The Australian Quarterly* for June, 1953, and in it appears an article headed "Political Review" by an eminent man, Professor Sawyer, Professor of Law in the Australian National University, Canberra. He said:—

Mr. Playford's Liberal Government was returned with its majority over Labor and

Independents reduced from seven to one, so that after providing a Speaker Mr. Playford has to rely on an Independent.

Mr. O'Halloran—Those figures are not correct.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—That is so. I am pointing out what people in high places are doing to discredit the Liberal majority in this State. Professor Sawyer also said:—

The South Australian position does appear to be dangerously unfair in that it makes a Labor victory almost a political impossibility.

This discredited the Liberal victory at the last election, which gave the Party the second highest majority it has had since 1938. A reputable journal, *The Round Table*, published in England and regarded as an authoritative review of political and economic affairs, contains the following in an anonymous article:—

In South Australia Mr. Playford's Liberal Government was returned with its majority over Labor and Independents reduced from seven to one, so that after providing a Speaker Mr. Playford has to rely on an Independent.

The two journals were published in June, 1953, yet the statements in the articles are identical. It is a fair inference that Professor Sawyer was the writer of the article in *The Round Table*.

Mr. John Clark—You do not imply that he is a member of the Labor Party?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—No. The honourable member is trying to put words into my mouth. I do not mind what inference Professor Sawyer draws from facts, but he should stick to facts, and not set out the position as it appears in the publication. He said it does appear that a Labor victory in South Australia is almost a political impossibility.

Mr. John Clark—We had a victory.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—If so, it was a hollow one. I would not like to have a victory of that sort. Let us have a look at the assertion that the Labor Party cannot win under the present political boundaries in South Australia. In the present Parliament there are 21 Liberal and Country League members, 14 Labor and four Independents. At one time the Labor Party held the seats of Gouger, Light, Torrens, Stanley, and Murray, all under the present electoral boundaries. At various times, of eight seats which have been held by Labor, seven have been held by the Liberal and Country League. The other three seats are Norwood, Prospect, and Victoria. There are eight seats which at one time or another the Liberal Party or an Independent has won from the Labor Party. Five of them have not been won back by the Labor Party. They could be won back if the Labor Party had

acceptable candidates and an acceptable policy. The prospects of Labor winning an election are not so remote when another 500 votes in 65,000 would have given the Labor Party the seats of Torrens, Unley, and Glenelg. A swing of three-quarters of one per cent, or 15 votes in 2,000, would have given the Labor Party three more seats in this Parliament. Then the Liberal and Country League would have held 18 seats, Labor 17, and Independents four. If the seat of Murray had been held, and Stanley, Light, and Gouger won back by the Labor Party, there would have been 21 Labor members, 15 Liberal and Country League, and three Independents. It does not appear to be such a remote possibility as Professor Sawyer and the Labor Party indicate.

Mr. John Clark—Do you believe in majority government?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I am not arguing that. I am arguing that Labor can win an election under the present electoral system if lost ground is recaptured. We have heard much about one vote one value, and I have no doubt that the Labor Party is completely unanimous in favour of it. Let us consider the position of the Legislative Council in New South Wales. There, where do we get with the principle of one vote one value? The two Houses sit as an electoral college and 50, 60, or 70 men, without reference to anybody else, elect the members of the Legislative Council.

Mr. O'Halloran—Who introduced that system?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I am not concerned with that. It still remains on the Statute Book with the consent of the Labor Party, because that Party over the years, with a majority in both Houses, could have changed the system at any time it liked. It does not want to change it, because it does not really believe in one vote one value when it does not want to believe in it. Not one member of the New South Wales Legislative Council is responsible to a single elector in the whole of that vast State. There are no electorates, constituencies, or constituents in the ordinary sense of the words; the members of the Upper House are elected by a mere handful of men. The Labor Party has a very elastic principle, which reminds me of the old story about the man who could turn mental somersaults and said to his listeners, "If these principles do not suit you, I can change them." Consider the position of Britain, which had the misfortune to have a Labor Government for five

years after the war. Did that Labor Government believe in one vote one value? That Party is the parent from which the Australian Labor Party was descended. Did it ask the people to elect additional members to the House of Lords? It simply proceeded to create peers itself overnight and stack the Upper House.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER—I ask honourable members to maintain order and to allow one member to speak at a time.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I ask honourable members whether it is adherence to the principle, one and indivisible, of one vote one value when a Government which has not enough members to carry its legislation proceeds by its own act to appoint additional members to the Upper House. This cry of "one vote one value" is a parrot cry and a sham. Members opposite are trying to drown my remarks which show how weak their policy is. I am talking about the inability of the Labor Party to win an election in South Australia and that is my theme.

Mr. O'Halloran—We will win one when there is a fair distribution of votes.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I again throw out a challenge to members of the Labor Party to prove the consistency of their argument of "one vote one value." I oppose the Bill tooth and nail. It is not a Bill for electoral reform, but a Bill to provide a substitute for an acceptable electoral policy.

Mr. JENNINGS (Prospect)—I support the Bill.

Mr. Dunks—Has your master spoken?

The SPEAKER—Order. I ask honourable members to allow the member for Prospect to be heard in silence.

Mr. JENNINGS—I support the Bill because I believe in democracy, which is, as the Premier and the honourable member for Parkside who has just resumed his seat have said—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member must not reflect on other members. Mr. Clarke is the member for Burnside. We have no member for Parkside. I ask the honourable member to conform to the rules of debate.

Mr. JENNINGS—I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I meant the member for Burnside. The Premier and his supporters oppose the Bill because obviously they fear democracy. This Bill, the second reading of which was ably moved by the Leader of the Opposition, who is the rightful Premier of South Australia, seeks to enthrone democracy in South Australia, and

therefore should be supported by all fair-minded members. However, it was opposed by the Premier, a man who is Premier only by the arrangement—a clever and unscrupulous arrangement—of electoral boundaries. It is significant that very few members on the other side appear to be anxious to speak on the Bill, and it is easy to understand why. This is one of those measures—and we just saw an example of it—on which as soon as an honourable member opposite opens his mouth he puts his foot in it. We can appreciate that and leave it to the Premier, whose mastery at misrepresentation is such that no one else can emulate it.

The SPEAKER—Order! Members in this House do not accuse other members of “masterly misrepresentation.” The honourable member must not reflect on other members.

Mr. JENNINGS—The Premier began his speech with a rather remarkable admission that he had made only a cursory examination of the Bill. There was no need for him to mention that because the further he went the more obvious it became. It is in conformity with the high-handed attitude of the Liberal Party adopted on this occasion that such an important measure should be treated so contemptuously. The same attitude was reflected in the Premier's delivery of his speech. He turned round and spoke almost exclusively to his own colleagues, as if to say, “What a wonderful job I am doing to preserve our political skins.” I thought then what a boon it would be if we only had television so that people could see the Premier as he really was, opposing this Bill, as distinct from that fictitious creature which has been built up by a combination of gerrymander and *Advertiser*. He did not attempt to justify the pernicious South Australian electoral system. Perhaps he thought that was beyond even him. What he did was to advance alleged wrongs that occurred all over Australia and other parts of the world, and then seek to establish from that that the electoral wrong existing in South Australia could be condoned. He instanced numerous electoral anomalies in various parts of the world, both real and imaginary, and then claimed that because electoral anomalies existed elsewhere it was reasonable to perpetuate an electoral anomaly in South Australia.

The Premier's next point was to claim that the principle of one vote one value had no validity whatsoever. I believe this is the

first occasion he has been forced to admit that he does not believe in the principle of one vote one value, and as a consequence does not believe in democracy. I feel that the electors of South Australia will be very interested in his admission that he does not subscribe to the principle of one vote one value. How can democracy be made real without it? When Abraham Lincoln spoke of “Government of the people, for the people, by the people” did he mean “government of the people, for the people, by a minority of the people,” or did he add as a rider, “provided that the vote of a country elector shall be three times the value of the vote of a city elector?” That would have been just as ludicrous as the Premier's contention. Many Tory Governments, such as the one we have here, have for generations opposed the principle of one vote one value, because they realized that under it government by privileged persons would end for ever. However, the struggle to bring into effect the principle of one vote one value has continued with significant success. In many democratic organizations throughout the world the democratic tradition that the majority shall prevail is the way they arrive at their decisions. How do football or cricket clubs or literary societies conduct their business? The majority holds sway, but the Premier and the member for Burnside do not subscribe to that principle. However, I believe that in the councils of the Liberal Party decisions are arrived at by majority vote, by one vote having one value. Of course, I do not know for sure, for I have never descended to the depths that one honourable member opposite admitted to, namely, placing pimps inside the Labor organization to find out how it works.

Mr. Pearson—I rise, on a point of order. The honourable member said that pimps were used to discover what goes on inside the Labor Party. Is that Parliamentary?

The SPEAKER—No. The Standing Orders require relevancy in debate and that the debate shall proceed on lines that are not offensive to other members or a reflection on the House or on members. Therefore, I say that the honourable member's reference to the employment of pimps is certainly a reflection upon the methods used by members of the House, and is not Parliamentary, nor in the best interests of the debate.

Mr. JENNINGS—I have no means of knowing what goes on inside Liberal Party councils, but I would be surprised if they do not

arrive at their decisions by a majority vote. I would be astonished if, at the convention of the Liberal and Country League to be held next week, delegates have their votes weighted according to what part of the State they come from.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Don't yours?

Mr. JENNINGS—No.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Don't you think a delegate from the Pinnaroo branch has as many votes as the delegate from Wallaroo, despite the number of people in the two districts?

Mr. JENNINGS—I was hoping the Minister would give me an interjection I could answer.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—You can't answer it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I can't, because I can't understand it. One of the greatest advances that the principle of one vote one value ever made was the recognition accorded it in our Commonwealth Constitution, section 24 of which states:—

The number of members chosen in the several States shall be in proportion to the respective numbers of their people.

Then it sets out how the quota is to be arrived at and stipulates that a redistribution shall be effected when the population figures change.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—What about the Senate? The ratio of population in New South Wales compared with Tasmania would be five to one.

Mr. JENNINGS—The method of electing the Senate is most unfair, for the principle of one vote one value does not apply. However, there is no reason to believe that the principle was deliberately rejected, for when the Senate was constituted it was regarded as a non-Party House. It has now become a Party House, and as far as we can see it is likely to remain so but that is no excuse for the unfairness of the South Australian system. The method of electing Senators is not nearly so unfair as the electoral system in this State. The State as a whole elects its group of Senators so we get a complete cross-section of the community represented in each group. It usually happens that the Senate reflects fairly accurately the way the people vote even though a different quota is required to elect the Senators for one State compared with another.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—The quota for Tasmania would be far below that for New South Wales.

Mr. JENNINGS—No number of wrongs will ever make a right. When speaking on the Bill the Premier made a long and rambling speech that was interesting because of the number of inaccuracies it contained. He stated that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the United Nations and refused to accept Mr. O'Halloran's assurance that he had not referred to that body at all. The Premier used the constitution of the United Nations as an excuse to justify the electoral set-up in South Australia, but the United Nations is a purely voluntary organization. It has no sovereign power and its decisions are not binding on anyone. The reference to that organization was a red herring drawn in to confuse the debate, and the reference to Dr. Evatt's associations with it was contemptible. The member for Burnside, by interjection, implied that Dr. Evatt had been a party to allowing the right of veto in the United Nations constitution, but it is well known that he fought most vigorously to have it taken out of the constitution. The Premier referred to the electoral system in Western Australia, but that did not do his case any good. By citing the gerrymander in that State he only proved that Liberal members there are no different from those here. He showed that they are just as prepared to resort to political subterfuge to maintain office as Government supporters in this State. The redistribution of seats in 1947 was made by a Liberal Government, but the measure was violently opposed by the Labor Opposition, even though the Premier told us the Labor Government now in office was quite happy about the position. Obviously, the Premier has not read the Western Australian *Hansards*, which give an entirely different picture.

Prior to the redistribution of seats the sparsely settled north-western zone had four representatives in Parliament, and due to the good sense of the electors they were all Labor members, but when the redistribution was effected the number of seats from that zone was reduced to three. That shows the Liberal Party was not concerned with giving country people more representation, but with reducing the number of Labor members. The Premier admitted that even in Western Australia a rural vote is worth only twice a metropolitan vote, so the position there is not nearly so bad as in South Australia where a country vote is worth more than three times the value of a metropolitan vote. The Premier was very bold indeed in saying that the Labor Party in Western Australia

does not intend to alter the electoral set-up there. I do not know how he would know that, but if the justifiable hostility which the Labor leaders in Western Australia showed to the re-distribution of boundaries is any indication the present Labor Government will certainly attempt to bring about a new re-distribution. It may not have been promised at the last elections, because there, as here, the Labor Party has to put up with an Upper House, a House of senility, and dominated by Tories. It may not be able to effect a fair re-distribution of boundaries, but the Premier has no right to assume that the Labor Government will not attempt it.

He also spoke about Queensland and said that there are more country members than metropolitan members in the Parliament of that State, but he told only half the truth. He carefully refrained from telling the whole truth. He deliberately suppressed information which the Leader of the Opposition sought by way of interjection regarding the population in both the country and metropolitan areas. Today Mr. Lawn effectively handled this matter. From him we learned that there are twice as many country representatives because there are twice as many country electors; therefore the principle of one vote one value has been given effect to by the Labor Government. The Premier then went to the north of Australia and treated us to a most irrelevant lecture on the Northern Territory Council. He endeavoured to mislead us into thinking that a Commonwealth Labor Government had established an undemocratic Parliament there. The fact is that no Parliament was established. It is an advisory council consisting of senior civil servants and elected members. It makes no laws, but only recommends to the Minister for the Interior, who has to accept full responsibility for either acting on the recommendations or rejecting them, and he is answerable to the democratically elected House of Representatives. The Premier took us around the world, yet it was most astonishing that he did not refer to the position in Victoria. It was a significant omission and not an accidental one. Recent history in that State shows beyond doubt that the future of people who like to meddle with ballots and methods of election is not too rosy. There was a gerrymander in that State perpetrated by conservative politicians. At the recent elections the Labor Party made electoral reform the principal issue. It sought and gained a mandate to re-arrange electoral boundaries and adopt a system under which there would be

two State electorates to one Commonwealth electorate. In other words, it was one vote one value. The Premier said that the principle has no validity at all, yet the electors in Victoria overwhelmingly supported it. An interesting side-light of that election was that the leader of the Liberal Party was soundly thrashed in his district, solely on the issue of electoral reform. It is easy to understand why the Premier in taking us on a trip around the world in his opposition to the Bill did not mention Victoria.

The claim is often made that country areas need greater representation in Parliament, because they have fewer amenities than other sections of the community. That is a matter I will not debate, but I believe it to be true and I deplore it. Surely the present system, which has operated for so long, has failed dismally to increase amenities in country districts, yet the excuse is advanced that the present system must be retained if the country areas are to get more amenities and the country people are to become more privileged in comparison with metropolitan dwellers. Our country areas will only advance when we legislate for the State as a whole instead of dividing it into purely artificial divisions. What privilege is there for country people to have country electorates drawn up in such a way that the Parliament becomes cluttered up with sub-standard country members?

Mr. HAWKER—Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I understood the honourable member to say that the Parliament would become cluttered up with sub-standard country members. I object to the remark and ask that he apologize and withdraw.

The SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members must maintain decorum when the Speaker is on his feet. Did the honourable member for Prospect use the words objected to by the member for Burra?

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes, but I did not mention any member in particular, and I had no particular member in mind.

The SPEAKER—As the honourable member used those words it is a gross reflection on members, and he must withdraw. He must not reflect on any honourable member.

Mr. JENNINGS—I withdraw the remark. I intended to draw attention to the fact that as country areas are drawn up in such a way that they almost inevitably contain a majority of Liberal voters any faithful servant of the Liberal Party can obtain endorsement and

remain a member of Parliament. It would be in the interests of country people if the electorates were more numerically strong so that both Parties would have to put up good candidates, thus giving the people an opportunity to make a much more effective choice. It applies in metropolitan electorates, and I have no doubt that the Liberal and Country League could find a similar type of candidate for country electorates. The matter is bound up closely with the other question that country members need to represent fewer constituents because of the sparse population to enable them to do their job properly. It is a point which might or might not have some validity. I think it is grossly exaggerated, because all Commonwealth electorates have the same number of electors, and we have heard no complaints that Commonwealth country constituents are not adequately represented. I have not heard that Grey, Angas, and Wakefield are not so well represented as Port Adelaide, Sturt, and Boothby. In New South Wales there is the same numerical strength in both country and metropolitan electorates, yet we do not hear that country electors are neglected. Mr. Lawn said that a member of Parliament represents the people. He does not represent miles of fencing, bales of wool, trees, or anything of that sort.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Does not the honourable member represent the least populous electorate in the metropolitan area?

Mr. JENNINGS—I am not arguing about what some members are qualified to represent, but saying that members are here to represent the people. It is people with problems who give members the work they have to do, and I submit that city dwellers have just as many personal problems as country people. In these days of effective communication it cannot be argued that it is not easy for country people to get in touch with their member. Even if it were admitted that country members were, from the point of view of representing their area, at a disadvantage compared with metropolitan members, there are other ways of overcoming the position than giving them the tremendously disproportionate voting strength prevailing in this House today. For example, could not we increase the travelling and expense allowances of members and provide them with secretarial assistance to help them out of their difficulties, without arranging the electoral districts in such a way that a minority Government is made almost inevitable? It is not fair that a few thousand electors in Frome

should have the same voting strength in this House as the 30,000 electors in the district of Port Adelaide.

Mr. O'Halloran—Hear, hear!

Mr. JENNINGS—The Leader of the Opposition, who represents Frome, is not responsible for the numerical smallness of his electorate. I will submit a non-political example which shows how unfair the present system is. Let us assume that a Bill was introduced to extend the liquor trading hours. I have no particular Bill in mind any more than the member for Torrens had any particular strike in mind when he asked a question recently.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is a Bill before another place on the subject and that precludes debate at this stage.

Mr. JENNINGS—I will use another example and assume there is a Bill before the House to extend the hours at which loaves of bread can be sold. If all the country members voted for it and all the metropolitan members voted against it, it would be easily carried by those who represent a minority of the people of the State even though the measure itself affected equally all the people of the State. If a vote on the same Bill were conducted on Party lines and all Labor members voted against it and all Liberal members for it, then it would still be carried, even though a majority of the members represented a minority of the electors. As I said earlier, I firmly believe that gerrymandering has been perpetuated by Conservative Governments to frustrate the will of the people. I submit an example of what happened in Western Australia. A Liberal Government there decreased the number of representatives in one of the most sparsely populated zones because the four seats were held by Labor. I claim that in this State also the purpose was not to provide greater country representation, but greater Liberal representation. The view I have just expressed has also been expressed by other than Labor representatives. There have been comments on the electoral laws of South Australia in the editorial columns of the *News*, published shortly after the last State election. One editorial stated:—

The Playford ministry has been returned with a majority, dependent on final counting in Unley, of either three or five over its Labor opponents. Yet almost exactly three out of every five South Australians who voted on Saturday preferred Labor candidates to Mr. Playford's supporters. Labor may well claim to have lost the election but to have proved up to the hilt its claim that under the present

distribution of electorates the majority will in this State is effectively muzzled. The question now arises: Is the Premier prepared to recognize the flagrant anomalies of the existing system, and disregarding party interest, to set up an electoral commission to institute reform? No playing with words can conceal the fact that where the votes of only two-fifths of the people are able to flout the will of half as many again there is not effective democracy. The onus is now squarely on his shoulders to accept the wishes expressed by the majority of Saturday's poll and clean up this maldistribution which grows worse progressively with today's population trends.

There was another editorial in the same paper shortly after the Leader of the Opposition had introduced the Bill now being debated. It was under the heading, "There is a Case for Voting Reform," and contained the following:—

Democratic principles support the South Australian Opposition Leader (Mr. O'Halloran) in the Bill he has introduced for electoral reform. The present State electoral divisions give a very unbalanced representation in Parliament between country and metropolitan voters. Each country vote today counts for more than three times as much as a metropolitan vote. This immensely strengthens the Liberal position at election time, and reacts to Labor's disadvantage. There are 13 metropolitan seats in the House of Assembly and 26 country seats. Only 38 per cent of the people on the Assembly rolls live in the country, but they return 67 per cent of the members. At the March State election 166,326 Labor supporters returned 10 members, and 119,003 L.C.L. voters returned 16 members, the aggregate A.L.P. vote exceeding the L.C.L. vote by 47,523. Five Liberal and four Labor members were returned unopposed.

There were also interesting cartoons in that paper on the same subject, one appearing a few days after the State election. It portrayed two persons named Mick and Tom, both of whom looked vaguely familiar. They are trying their strength at a machine. It is shown that Mick got 156,000 votes and Tom 105,000, and the sideshow spruiker is saying, "Sorry old man, but the way we assess it he (pointing to Tom) is the winner." I ask leave, Mr. Speaker, to have this cartoon incorporated in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER—Standing Orders were amended last year to enable statements in schedule form and tables of figures to be incorporated in *Hansard* without being read. The position is that something may be incorporated without being read, but it must be a schedule or a short statement. We have never permitted any diagram, picture or illustration to be inserted in *Hansard*, and therefore I rule that the honourable member cannot have the cartoon inserted.

Mr. JENNINGS—There was another very interesting cartoon on this same subject in the *News* a few days ago. It was rather topical, having been published during a recent upheaval which involved trams called "Bouncing Billies." It showed a tram labelled "South Australian Electoral Set-up" tearing downhill with the Premier at the wheel shouting "Look! no brakes! But who said I wanted to stop her!" and the caption is "Bouncing Tommy." Rather significantly the cartoons shows the tram right off the rails. The member for Adelaide drew attention to the fact that press reports indicate that at the Liberal and Country League annual meeting to be held next week certain items on the agenda relate to electoral reform. I do not know whether at long last certain Liberal and Country League branches are becoming conscience-stricken, or whether they have their ear a bit closer to the ground than their Parliamentary representatives and are anxious to avert the anger of the people on this question, or whether the Liberal Party in South Australia, which has for so long been kept in subjection by its dictatorial leader, is now beginning to crack. Whatever it is, it is an indication that people other than Labor people are talking about and are prepared to act on electoral reform.

The Bill before the House stipulates proportional representation. Members on this side believe in that principle because they know it is the only way that the votes of the people can be fairly and accurately reflected in Parliament. There is no need for me to answer the Premier's wild allegations about proportional representation because the member for Gawler did that very effectively. If, despite that, the Government still does not like proportional representation, we would welcome the Bill passing the second reading so that another electoral system superior to the unfair position now existing, could be substituted for proportional representation.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—Why doesn't the great Australian Labor Party adopt it?

Mr. JENNINGS—If the Government does not allow the Bill to pass the second reading it can only be taken that the Premier, who is the Government, is determined to maintain power whether the people want him or not.

The Hon. M. McIntosh—You have evaded my question. Why doesn't the Labor Party adopt the principle?

Mr. JENNINGS—I am anxious to know what members opposite really think of our electoral laws. It seems that owing to a

sudden attack of lockjaw we shall not find out. I wonder what the Speaker thinks of them. We know he is devoted to the interests of proper Parliamentary procedure. He is justly proud of the high position he occupies, but how does he view presiding over a House that suppresses all that a democratic Parliament should uphold? What does the Minister of Lands—a man of inherent decency—think of being a Minister in a minority Government? What does the Minister of Works—that capable and able administrator; he must be because he admits it himself—think of having to carry out his numerous duties when by rights he should be having a rest as a private member? Some members opposite do not think at all, but we know what the Premier thinks. He is determined to retain the existing system, not because he believes it to be fair or just, or because of any excuses that the country people need greater representation, but because he wants to keep the system as it enables him to remain Premier of the State. It is unfortunate that a man of the talents of the Premier should have sacrificed his rightful place in history, because history will now regard him as the first, and I hope the last dictator of South Australia. This man who is built up by the press as a super atomic statesman is, in fact, so pusillanimous that he is frightened of a fair vote. This man, who masquerades and is pleased to be known as “Honest Tom,” is frightened of an honest electoral system. This man who professes to respect the Leader of the Opposition—and he should respect him—has deprived Mr. O’Halloran, by the perpetuation of our present electoral system, of the high honour of becoming Premier of the State, a position that Mr. O’Halloran has earned. The Premier has retained the office and the profit of being Premier whereas, according to all decent standards, he should not now be in office. I support the Bill and hope that at even this late stage the Government will allow it to pass the second reading so that a fairer and more equitable system may be evolved, even though the measure may not eventually be passed in the form that we on this side desire.

Mr. STEPHENS (Port Adelaide)—I wholeheartedly support the Bill, not only because I am a member of the Australian Labor Party, but because I want to see the nation advance. I do not want to see a state of affairs that exists in some countries where the people defy the law. They have been

treated in a manner similar to our people. They now oppose the law because they say they have had no voice in making it. The Leader of the Opposition introduced the Bill in the interests of democracy, on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, and on behalf of the people of this State. He drew back the curtain so that the people could see the position in which they had been placed as electors. He showed them that there is no electoral justice in South Australia and that the people are not governed as they should be. The Premier complained that he had not ample opportunity to peruse the Bill but I have often complained that the Premier himself has introduced legislation and given his second reading speech before the Bill was on our files. He has often moved the second reading late at night, expecting the Leader of the Opposition to be able to analyse the measure and make his speech within 10 or 12 hours. However the Premier had the assistance of his officers at his disposal and had a week or more in which to peruse the Bill and the Leader of the Opposition’s speech, yet he complained about the short time he had at his disposal. He was not able to put forward one genuine reason for opposing the measure, though he found many excuses. He did not say why the people should be robbed of the value of their votes. He travelled all around the world to find a curtain with which to hide the real position from the view of the electors. He tried to smother it with a smoke bomb so that the people would not understand it.

We make laws to govern human beings, not to govern the land or animals, but do members opposite place most value on land, animals, money, or human beings? Recently we heard members talking about the good book, saying we should follow it. Many people show little respect for its teachings when they put land, money and animals before God’s own people. When I was first elected to Parliament a Bill was brought down to increase the term of that Parliament from three to five years. The Labor Party members fought strenuously against it, and were supported by two Liberal members and one Independent. We realized that the further Parliament was removed from the people the closer they got to a dictatorship. However, the numbers were against us and the measure was passed, although we were successful in having it amended to provide that the term of a member of the Legislative Council should be eight years, instead of 10. When the Bill went to the Council a period

of 10 years was insisted upon and I am sorry to say that when it was returned to this place Government members weakened and the wish of the Council was accepted. It meant that only once in 10 years would Council members have to face the electors, who were very perturbed about the matter. Following on the next election the Government which had proposed five years, reverted to three-year Parliaments. Later I shall give members some figures in connection with representation under the present electoral set-up. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted and debate adjourned.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

PASTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.5 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, September 15, at 2. p.m.