HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, October 7, 1953.

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

QUESTIONS.

CAPE TULIP.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—It has been brought to my notice by farmers in the Port Elliot district that there is a prevalence in the area of Cape Tulip. Can the Minister of Agriculture tell me:—(1) Whether the control of this weed comes within the scope of the local government body concerned? (2) Is there any method of dealing with it on roadsides where it is not possible to destroy it by ploughing? (3) Is there an effective spray for it and is the formula available from the Department of Agriculture?

The Hon. Sir GEORGE JENKINS—As to question No. 1, local government authorities throughout the State are responsible for the administration of the provisions of the Noxious Weeds Act, 1931-1939, within their respective districts. Cape Tulip is a weed proclaimed noxious under this Act for the whole State of South Australia. It is the responsibility of the district council of Port Elliot to ensure that control measures aiming at the eradication of Cape Tulip and similarly proclaimed noxious weeds are adequately carried out in its council district. As to No. 2, as an alternative to hand-grubbing of the weed, a practice which should be accompanied by destruction of the bulbs so grubbed, herbicides can be sprayed on to the Cape Tulip infested areas. The mode of reproduction by the weed makes it necessary to carry this work out for a number of consecutive seasons to ensure complete eradication. As to No. 3, the Department of Agriculture has prepared an illustrated poster giving comprehensive details of methods and materials recommended for Cape Tulip control. Copies of this poster have been supplied to local government authorities, including the district council of Port Elliot.

TEXTILE PRODUCTS DESCRIPTION ACT.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—In 1944 the State Parliament passed the Textile Products Description Act. It was regarded as a measure of some urgency, because it was suggested that it would protect the producer of wool and also the consumer who wore the finished article. The Act provided that anyone who sold a garment containing wool had to mark it "all wool" or whatever percentage of wool it contained. I have noticed in the press from time to time requests by woolgrowers that the Act should be enforced. One would think it a desirable Act because it would protect every section of the community, but so far as I can ascertain it has not yet been enforced. Can the Premier indicate the Government's intention in regard to it?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—There is no difficulty in this matter so far as policy is concerned, but there is a good deal in the application of the policy. The difficulty arises because under the Commonwealth Constitution there is freedom of trade between the States. That makes it essential for all States and the Commonwealth to be in agreement on this matter. After the legislation was passed here it was found incapable of operation because of legislative difficulties in it, and since that time there have been a large number of conferences between the States and the Commonwealth. Probably it is the largest docket we have. The wool interests asked that textile goods should show not only the percentage of wool they contain but also the percentage of other textiles. That was agreed to by the States but was impossible of application because there was no chemical process available to enable us to separate the various textiles. Another problem was in connection with once-used wool. Again there was no chemical process to distinguish wool which had been re-processed. There is now a proposal approved by all States and the Commonwealth. It is somewhat less ambitious than the original proposal, but it will no doubt be put into general effect in the very near future.

NURIOOTPA WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. TEUSNER—The Nuriootpa water supply is unsatisfactory in some years, particularly in the summer months, owing to the poor pressure. The following is an extract from a letter I have received from the secretary of the Nuriootpa Community Centre, Incorporated:—

During the summer months frequent complaints are made by the headmaster of the district high school and people living in the community centre housing area that the water supply is unsatisfactory due to low pressure. In addition to the headmaster of the high school and the park caretaker, there are 20 families living in this area, and more homes will be built shortly. We understand that there is a water main which terminates at Schmidt's corner, which is about a quarter of a mile from the area mentioned. It has been suggested to us that if this main were extended from Schmidt's corner to the area at present affected by the low pressure the problem would be overcome.

Will the Minister of Works accede to the request in the letter with a view to having the water pressure in the locality improved?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I will have an immediate investigation made into the cost, cause and effect. A mile of main might cost anything from £1,500 to £6,000. I do not know the size of the main at Nuriootpa nor the degree of inconvenience the people are suffering.

COMSTOCK IRON ORE DEPOSIT.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked on September 24 regarding a geological survey of the Quorn district and the Comstock ore deposits?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have received the following report from the Director of Mines:—

These deposits were reported upon in 1922 (*Geological Survey Bulletin* No. 9). Investigation then revealed that the ore bodies consist essentially of limonite with a little haematite, and that they do not persist in depth. It was estimated that a total of 350,000 tons of ore would be obtainable from the deposits which on assay showed an iron content of a little less than 50 per cent. Earlier workings indicate that negative results were obtained from the dumps, and having regard to all the evidence available it is not considered that these deposits are of any economic value.

ROAD SIGNS "TO MELBOURNE."

Mr. SHANNON—I have had complaints from residents in what we call the Woodside Road where it branches from the Princes Highway at Germantown Hill that interstate travellers wake them up at all hours of the night asking where Princes Highway is and which is the road to Melbourne. There are signs on Princes Highway reading "To Melbourne," which give interstate travellers an assurance that they are on the right road, but that does not apply to Germantown Hill, where there are a number of signs pointing to various towns, and also the words "Princes Highway." It has been suggested to me that if a fairly bold sign reading "To Melbourne" were put up on that same signpost it would overcome much of the inconvenience now caused to residents on the Woodside Road, and also save travellers time and inconvenience. Will the Minister of Local Government consider this matter?

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—I know the point mentioned very well. I am sorry there has been inconvenience. I will gladly ask the Highways Commissioner to give the matter his best attention.

BUILDING CONTROL BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 30. Page 841.)

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD (Premier and Treasurer)—I have not had much time to examine the Bill closely, but it appears to provide for two things in particular. One is a continuation, in part at least, of some of the controls which have been discontinued under the Building Materials Act, which, among other things, provided that the Government could, by declaration, discontinue certain parts of the measure. Declarations were made from time to time until at the beginning of this session only two controls remained. One dealt with the necessity for a contractor to lodge trust moneys in a joint account with the owner on those occasions when no time was specified for the completion of the contract, and the other related to the demolition of dwellings, which the Government stated it was not intended to continue. Only a very small number of approvals have ever been given for demolitions. It has not been the Government's policy, while houses were in short supply, to agree to demolitions, but now increasing pressure, particularly from councils, is being brought to bear on the Government to allow action to be taken concerning sub-standard houses. The court gave an important ruling under the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act on this matter to the effect that vacant possession could be obtained of a house which had been condemned by a council on the ground that it was no hardship to the tenant if he were evicted, because in effect he was being evicted under the Health Act, which is administered by councils. Under clause 4 of the Bill, the member for Goodwood seeks to reimpose a system of control over the disposition by merchants of building materials.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is only in case of an emergency.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That is so. The Minister in charge has to be satisfied that damage that has been done by fire, storm or tempest and that repairs are urgent. Let me submit a simple illustration. I have a house in which I desire to live, and have placed an order for the iron with a well-known merchant, say, Harris Scarfe and Co. Limited. I have arranged for the builders to complete the house within a certain time, but because of some order from a Minister my galvanized iron is not supplied to me. That means that we divert the iron from one use to another. It certainly does not make more galvanized iron which is in

short supply available; indeed, it may result in just as much hardship to the person that loses the iron as benefit to the person who gets it.

Mr. O'Halloran—The position of the former would not be as bad as that of the man who had a home but lost it through storm or tempest.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—But relative hardship is not envisaged in this Bill. It could be argued that a person who has been living in a house for 10 years is relatively better off than someone who has never had a house but is trying to get one. I do not believe the purpose of the Bill is achieved by clause 4. I do not suggest that members opposite are not entirely in favour of the clause but if the Bill depended for its introduction on this clause I doubt whether it would have been introduced.

Mr. O'Halloran—You wouldn't make a living as a fortune teller.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I have not had one question from members on this matter during the whole of the session. Usually a members asks a question about any matter he is particularly concerned about, or mentions it in the Address in Reply debate. I am not in the House all the time, but I do not remember any member advocating that we should again control the disposition of building materials.

Mr. Heaslip—We don't want that.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That interjection supports my contention.

Mr. O'Halloran—Didn't you ask us a few weeks ago to submit our cement and galvanized iron requirements to you?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—On several occasions members have asked for assistance in obtaining cement and galvanized iron for constituents urgently needing them. Those requests received prompt attention.

Mr. O'Halloran—Yes, considering the Government had no control over those materials.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—That does not mean it is now necessary to put into operation a system of complete control, for complete control would be necessary if complete justice were to be done. Recently a freak storm unroofed several houses, but neighbours, merchants and the Government did their best to help the unfortunate occupants. Some were immediately moved into other houses.

Mr. O'Halloran—And as a result others were deprived of those homes.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, but only for a few days. In other instances the Government made materials available to assist unfortunate occupants, and I am certain any merchant or contractor would help without any Ministerial directions under formal legislation such as that now before the House. That shows emergencies can be met by voluntary effort and without the rigmarole of Acts of Parliament. One of the sufferers said he did not know he had so many friends until a storm severely damaged his house. I believe the real reason for the introduction of the Bill lies in clause 6. The provisions in clauses 4 and 5 are not its real purpose, but are merely ancillary to it. Those clauses would set up a system of Ministerial control which is unnecessary to meet the requirements of present-day conditions, and do not fulfil the first qualification which should be fulfilled by all legislation, for they are not remedial in their effect. Whenever a calamity has occurred in this State merchants, builders, Government, local councils, and the public have immediately rallied together to remedy its effects. For these reasons I do not support clauses 4 and 5.

I debated the matters contained in clause 6 earlier this session when I explained a Bill dealing with building practices, and I made it quite clear to the Opposition then that the Government did not propose to control the demolition of houses after the expiration of the present provisions of the legislation. In fact, the member for Adelaide said he would oppose that Bill, but I pointed out that it contained a provision he wanted. I believe this Bill has been introduced to remedy an alleged defect in that which I introduced earlier. I know from the smiles on the faces of members opposite that that is the fact of the matter. Some years ago this Government, with the unanimous support of the Opposition, passed legislation having as its purpose the demolition of sub-standard houses. That legislation is on the Statute Book today and I believe it represents the opinion of every right-thinking person. I have always considered the paramount functions of Parliament to be the provision of homes, hospitals and education for our people.

Mr. Jennings—Yet you have not appointed a Minister of Housing.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It might surprise the honourable member to know that within the last few days a local government authority, which by no stretch of imagination could be regarded as a supporter of my Government, has written to it suggesting action

to demolish a considerable number of houses in its area considered not of reasonable standard.

Mr. Riches—Clause 6 does not single out sub-standard houses.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—It does not single out anything, but provides that no house shall be demolished except with the consent of the Minister or on an order of the local health authorities. The purpose of the clause is to prevent the demolition of a house unless such approval has been obtained. The member for Adelaide is to be congratulated on his desire to obtain houses for his constituents, but I doubt whether he wants the provision that the health authorities may order the demolition of a house, except that, to abolish it, he would have to abolish the Health Act, which is something that could not be lightly undertaken. The honourable member probably considers that at present no house should be demolished except where it is in an extremely bad state.

Mr. Lawn—Uninhabitable.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes. The health authorities have the right to order the demolition of any house considered by them to be unsuitable and have a much greater authority than the honourable member would like to see exercised today. Having looked at this matter fairly and squarely we believe that, although in certain instances the present law has resulted in hardship, in many instances the houses proposed to be demolished would be vacant before any request was made for their demolition. Acting on Parliament's general directions we have refused an order for demolition where the house is inhabited and even when the owner has said quite frankly that, whether an order is made or not the house will not be used as a dwelling place. From the number of such applications received, the circumstances of those applications, and the general position with regard to sub-standard houses, I do not believe the time has yet arrived when we can go in for wholesale demolition of houses which may be sub-standard, as was proposed by one local government authority. However, I think we can now lift the restrictions without causing any hardship. We on this side believe that the Government should impose controls no more than is necessary. For over 100 years it was not regarded as necessary to have this type of legislation, and it was put on the Statute Book by my Government only because it became essential to control building materials. I think no State in the Commonwealth now controls them. I do not think the Bill is necessary and my Government decided not to reintroduce the provisions set out in clauses 5 and 6; therefore I oppose the Bill.

Mr. LAWN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STEEL WORKS NEAR WHYALLA.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Riches:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the desirability of establishing a steel works in the vicinity of Whyalla and to report to Parliament on steps to be taken to implement recommendations made by the Director of Mines on such an undertaking.

(Continued from September 30. Page 848.)

Mr. DAVIS (Port Pirie)—I support the motion. It deals with one of the most important matters introduced in this House since I have been a member. I am surprised that there has been opposition to the motion by members opposite because production of steel in Australia is far behind the demand. I listened attentively to remarks by the Premier and Mr. Shannon. The latter was very concerned about what would happen if we offended the Broken Hill Pty. Co. A previous Liberal Government sold the birthright of South Australians when it let the company have control of the iron ore deposits near Whyalla. It was surprising to read the conflict of opinion between the present Premier and the Hon. R. L. Butler, who was Premier in 1937. The latter made it clear that the Government intended to give the company an adequate water supply if it established steel works at Whyalla. The present Premier tried to mislead members by saying the other day that the water supply was put there for the benefit of the shipbuilding yards, and not for the steel works. When the 1937 Bill was discussed there was no mention of shipbuilding. It was not until two years afterwards that shipbuilding yards were first mentioned. Although a large sum of money was spent in providing Whyalla with a water supply, the company has not carried out its part of the contract. A steel works has not yet been established. Prior to 1937 residents of Port Pirie and Rocky River asked the Government for a water supply to help them grow foodstuffs but the Government would not agree, yet it promised the company a water supply if it established steel works at Whyalla. Section 3 of the B.H.P. Co.'s Indenture Act states:—

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works shall, as soon after the passing

of this Act as is convenient, inquire into and report to the Governor upon the possible methods of improving the water supply of the northern water district, and of the lands extending north of that district as far as Port Augusta; and in framing its recommendations the said committee shall have regard to the possibility that a supply of water may be required at or near Whyalla for the purpose of enabling the Broken Hill Pty. Company Ltd. to establish and operate coke oven plant and other works for the production of steel as mentioned in clause 13 of the Indenture set out in the schedule to this Act.

That section makes it clear what was intended. Clause 13 of the schedule provides as follows:—

In order to assist the company to further extend its works by the establishment in the vicinity of Whyalla of coke oven plant and/or works for the production of steel, rolling mills, and other plant, the Government on being notified by the company that it is prepared to establish any such works will use every endeavour to provide the company with a supply of fresh water at the site of such works sufficient for the full requirements of the company at such fair and reasonable price as may be mutually agreed upon.

I presume the company must have given the Government an assurance that it would establish steel works at Whyalla, otherwise the pipeline from the Murray would not have been laid. Therefore, I contend that the company has not carried out its part of the contract. In his speech on the motion the Premier said *inter alia*:—

My Government has never been backward in any enterprise to help the development of Whyalla. When money was sorely needed and materials very scarce because of war requirements, my Government laid the pipeline to Whyalla, which was one of the greatest engineering feats ever accomplished in this State, for the express purpose of establishing the shipbuilding industry, which is so valuable to Whyalla today. We concluded an agreement with the B.H.P. for the establishment of a tinplate industry there, but unfortunately the proposal was dropped as a result of the war and a succession of tariff inquiries. However, it was decided to go forward with a cold strip mill, which has now cost about £20,000,000 but is still not in operation, and has taken up all the resources of the company. I still believe that the original project of a tinplate plant would have paid for itself by now. We have discussed the establishment of steel mills at Whyalla on many occasions, but there are one or two fundamental difficulties that no Select Committee could overcome. Firstly, the Commonwealth Government will not be a partner to the proposal the honourable member has set out.

The Premier said that the reason for the tinplate industry not being established was the intervention of World War II., but there was more than that. Overseas interests prevented the company from establishing the industry at Whyalla, and I believe the same thing has prevented the establishment of the steel industry here. The Premier also mentioned that while in England he had negotiations with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and ascertained that there was no chance of getting any financial assistance from the British Government. The steel industry in England does not desire a similar industry established here because then its exports would be affected. Although the demand for steel goods is growing day by day, the output is smaller than it was a few years ago. If we are to populate Australia, we must provide steel for the building of homes. During World War II. sufficient steel products were not available to meet home building demands, as most of it was being employed for war purposes. We all expect that in the near future we will possibly be engaged in another war. In that event we will find ourselves in a worse position as regards steel supplies than during World War II. No honourable member, if he is honest about it, desires a steel shortage. Other countries are facing up to their responsibilities because they realize they must do something to improve steel production. Members should be prepared to accept any recommendation of Mr. Dickinson, the Director of Mines. However, his recommendation on this project is opposed by the Government, and that without any investigation. That did not occur as regards the development of Radium Hill or Leigh Creek. The Government then accepted his recommendations, but on this occasion it considers that further investigations must be made. That is all the motion seeks. It is very desirable that there should be an inquiry. Whyalla is the most suitable place for the location of steel mills. The iron ore would have to be hauled only about 33 miles from Iron Knob to Whyalla for smelting. I believe it would be more economical to treat the ore at Whyalla than to transport it hundreds of miles by sea to Newcastle. It would be better to bring coal to Whyalla from Newcastle, because there is valuable residue from iron, but little from coal. Mr. Dickinson's report shows that the iron ore deposits in South Australia are very rich, but we are becoming short of steel. We have had to import large quantities, so it is the duty of every member to seriously consider Mr. Dickinson's recommendations. In his report of August, 1951, he stated:—

With the exception of tinplate, Australia now produces all the steel products commonly used

in our everyday life. However, the quantities available fall far short of the current demand. In 1949-50 the output of ingot steel was 1,178,800 tons, whilst the demand, ignoring export potentialities altogether, was 2,830,000 tons. The gap between production and the requirements thus amounted to 1,651,200 tons. This gap was made good in part by imports of finished steel products amounting to the equivalent to 810,000 tons of ingot steel. In recent months supplies from this source have become less freely available and a more serious shortage seems certain in 1951. The present capacity of the steel works is 1,880,000 tons of ingot steel, nearly 1,000,000 tons less than the 1949-50 requirements of 2,830,000 tons. By 1952 it will reach 2,450,000 tons and by 1957-60, current plans provide for a total capacity of 3,000,000 tons of ingot steel. It will be seen, therefore, that the Australian economy depends very much on imported steel. It is obvious also that the present and planned capacity of the Australian steel works can by no means satisfy the future requirements of the Australian economy, the growth of which is being accelerated by migration and national development programmes and latterly by a demand for more steel for armaments.

Like many other people, Mr. Dickinson realizes the necessity for establishing steel works to increase Australia's output of steel products.

Mr. Stott—What is the duty on imported steel?

Mr. DAVIS—I do not know, but perhaps the Premier does. According to Mr. Dickinson's report Australia is paying two or three times as much for imported steel as for the Australian article. Why should we be penalized to that extent when we have everything necessary in this country to make steel? Mr. Dickinson continued:—

On present indications the demand for steel in Australia is expected to increase at a rate of at least 5-10 per cent per annum during the next ten years. In all probability, by 1959-60 it will reach at least five million tons per annum. Therefore, instead of raising the capacity of Australian steel-making facilities to three million tons in 1960, which is approximately the present day demand, the aim should be to increase the annual capacity of Australian steel-making furnaces in 1960 to at least five million tons. Canada, South Africa, India, Mexico and Brazil have already raised their outputs of steel to more than twice the 1937 level. The United States in 1950 produced 86.36 million tons compared with 69.62 million tons in 1949. By 1952 the steel companies of the United States plan to add an additional eight million tons to meet all foreseeable demands. In Britain, likewise, the output of steel has risen continuously from 12,725,000 tons in 1947 to a new record of 16,292,700 tons in 1950. Australia, with its ability to produce the cheapest steel in the world, should also establish larger capacities than ever before, both for its developmental needs as well as for meeting the emergencies of the future.

That report shows that other countries have faced up to their responsibilities and realize the need to increase steel production. Is it right that though we can produce the cheapest steel in the world we are forced to pay the most for it? This Government should do everything possible to increase steel production. What will happen if we are involved in another war? We shall find ourselves lagging behind other countries. The member for Onkaparinga said the various States should not be considered as separate countries, but South Australia should accept its responsibilities and do everything possible in the interests of the Commonwealth by using the materials at our disposal to the best advantage. By passing the motion the Government would be doing something in the best interests of people throughout the Commonwealth. I hope more red herrings will not be drawn across the trail, but that the motion will be considered on its merits. Even the Chancellor of the Exchequer said further investigations into our iron and steel industries should be carried out. I admit he did not say Britain would be prepared to finance any expansions, but he said Mr. Dickinson's report was an excellent one. Even if the Government is not prepared to carry out Mr. Dickinson's recommendations, it should at least act on the recommendations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that further investigations be made.

Mr. JENNINGS secured the adjournment of the debate.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (ELECTORAL).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 30. Page 856.)

Mr. FRED WALSH (Thebarton)—Practically every member on the Government side who has spoken referred to the electoral systems in other States, except Victoria. That was because the position there did not suit their argument. There has been a clamour for electoral reform in Victoria for as long as in this State. However, in Victoria there has been instability of Government brought about by differences of opinion in the anti-Labor forces. Electoral injustice between country and metropolitan areas in Victoria was almost as bad as in South Australia. As the result of an agreement between the Country Party and the Labor Party legislation was passed in that State to give adult franchise for Legislative Council elections. That was a

worthy move, but unfortunately the arrangement that had been made about electoral reform was not carried out in its entirety, for on the question of the redistribution of boundaries for the Assembly the Government fell down on the job. A serious split developed in the Liberal Party in Victoria, and the issue on electoral reform was so great that the Leader of the so-called break-away group, Mr. Hollway, and the leader of the Liberal Party contested a non-Labor district purely on the issue of electoral boundaries. The leader of the Party was defeated and that shows conclusively that the Victorian Government has a mandate to introduce, with the support of the break-away Liberal members, electoral reform. In the near future Victorians can look forward to some degree of political justice.

The South Australian Parliament is not representative and for a number of years our electoral system has been deliberately designed to prevent majority rule. Although this House is supposed to be the all-important branch of the Legislature it is dominated by the Legislative Council. It must be borne in mind that that Chamber, elected by a minority of the electors under restricted franchise and one which discriminates so severely against women, can control all the legislation of the State, in fact, the economic destiny of all housewives. The amazing aspect about it all is that the Premier and his supporters claim this to be democratic. The fact is that the present system perpetuates the preference and privilege of property over human values. This is not democratic, it is autocratic. It makes parliamentary government farcical, renders the term "representative parliament" an absurdity and makes democracy impossible.

These are factors of government that breed autocrats and result in despotic administration. The denial of the rights of the majority is the very essence of totalitarian government. I suggest that is just what is happening in South Australia today under gerrymander electorates and a most unfair Legislative Council franchise. Hence our desire to remove these obstacles to the election of a representative parliament and to provide machinery for a democratic system of government.

Mr. O'Halloran has told members how he proproposes to establish this reform by amending the Constitution to provide equitable electoral boundaries, with one roll for all Parliamentary elections, retaining compulsory enrolment and voting, and introducing proportional representation with uniform franchise for both Houses of Parliament. This involves a redistribution of seats, or to make it clearer, new electoral boundaries. One roll for all Parliamentary elections means one franchise and the use of the same roll for State and Federal elections. This would remove the necessity of maintaining a separate Legislative Council roll, thus saving some little expense, but this is not advocated on the ground of economy. We put it forward as a matter of principle, the principle of the recognition of human rights as against the privilege of property. We claim that the election of members under the system of proportional representation will produce a representative Parliament and give the electors an effective voice in the government of the State.

Figures have been used extensively in support of the Bill by certain of my colleagues, figures that have been carefully compiled, which reflect credit on those who have used them, so it is not my desire or intention to indulge in repetition, but I think it would not be out of place to give members information on the nature of our Parliamentary progress through the years. It was in 1857 that we had our first elected Parliament. In that Parliament the House of Assembly comprised 36 members. The population of the colony at that time was approximately 108,000 or an average of 3,000 a member. The number of members of the House of Assembly remained the same for 15 years until 1872 when the population reached 190,000 or an average of nearly 5,300 a member. Then in 1875 there was an increase to 46 members with the population at 215,000, giving an average of nearly 4,700 persons a member. This representation was continued until 1881 when the population was 281,000 or 6,100 persons a member. There was another increase in the number of members in 1884 to 52, the proportion of members to population then being one to every 5,700 persons. This representation lasted for six years. The population continued to increase when in 1890 it stood at 320,000. At this time the number of members was again increased, this time to 54, giving an average of 5,900 persons a member. This representation continued for the next 12 months. In the meantime the population increased to 357,000 with an average of 6,600 persons a member.

It was at this time we reached a very interesting phase of our political set-up in South Australia. It will be remembered that it was at this time that the Labor Party came into existence, and from then on, the rigging of boundaries and the erection of constitutional barriers became part of the anti-Labor

policy. In 1902 there was a reduction in the number of members from 54 to 42, resulting in an average of about 8,500 persons a member. This position remained until 1911. As from 1912 the number of members was again reduced, this time to 40. The population then was 424,000, and the average number of persons a member was 10,600. This lasted until 1915. This was the great gerrymander period, when there was an increase of members to 46, with population at 446,000 and the average being 9,700 persons a member. This basis remained until 1933 by which time the population had grown to 581,000 and the average number of persons a member to 12,200. This was the Parliament in which the gerrymander of electorates as we know it today was perpetrated. This also was the period when, given a majority the Liberal Party, not satisfied with winning a Government and fixing the electorates to secure its retention of office for an indefinite period, also decided to help itself to a five year term; thus the life of Parliament was extended to five years. As a result there was no election until 1938, by which time the State had been cut up into 39 Assembly electorates. The population in that year was 593,000 while the average number of persons a member stood at 15,205, but this is not reflected in the number of electors represented by members in the various electorates under the present boundaries.

That is the history of the changes that have taken place in respect to representation in the House of Assembly since 1857, from which it will be seen that the number of members is not much greater now than it was 90 years ago and the number of persons per member is more than five times what it was then. Is this the type of Parliamentary representation that Australian soldiers fought for in two world wars? Does it measure up to the standards we prescribe for others? Surely no-one thinks that with our growing population, the experience of the older countries will not be ours unless we practise within our own State the principles we prescribe for others? We on this side of the House seek to remove the anomalies complained of by Constitutional means, and, in asking for Constitutional justice, we also ask for a proper recognition of human rights.

Much has been said about other countries in the course of this debate. In an effort to ridicule Mr. O'Halloran's advocacy of the principle of one vote one value, the Premier quoted the position in certain States of America, and it is true that the State of Nevada has the same representation in the U.S. Senate as the State of New York. No-one would suggest that that is a fair and equitable representation, but it must be remembered that it was from America that Australia first got the idea of the gerrymander, so the use of American conditions as an argument does not help those who oppose this Bill. Americans take less interest in politics than do Australians, and generally only just over 50 per cent of Americans exercise their right to vote. A state of affairs is being reached in America whereby, although the country dweller, particularly in farming areas, is entitled to greater representation than the city dweller, he is not represented in the manner intended, for big financial interests sponsor stooges to stand for country seats in the State and National Legislatures, and once elected they carry out the bidding of their sponsors. In the line up in the House of Representatives during the 81st Congress, in an assembly of 435 there were 244 lawyers, 77 business men and bankers, 26 journalists (mostly publishers), 24 teachers, 23 farmers (full or part time), 13 former Government employees, eight wage earners or union people, and 25 were doctors, dentists, accountants and such. This information is contained in a journal issued by the Congress Industrial Organization, which states:—

> The two large groups of people in the country are wage earners and farmers. By and large they are not represented in the councils of the country. The Michigan Legislature, which is a rough outline of the situation in every legislature, breaks down like this—44 business men (small town business men chiefly), 15 farmers, 14 lawyers, 12 wage earners and union people, 6 Government employees, 2 teachers, 1 journalist, and 6 unknown. In the Michigan Senate—18 business men, 7 lawyers, 3 farmers, 1 doctor, 1 journalist, 2 unknown.

In regard to gerrymandering, the journal says:—

> Through the apportionment of legislators, that is, by the way States are cut up into districts and by laws that are taken for granted without examination, the small city slickers have the country so locked up that there is no way the majority of the people in the country who live in cities can get fair representation in State Legislatures under the present districting. . . . . The constitutions of many of these States say that the House of Representatives shall be made up of delegates from districts of approximately equal populations. But the small town politicians control the State Legislatures and they have shown no inclination to pass the laws the Constitution requires. These laws of course would end the dictatorship of the States and of the national Government. Tennessee was last re-apportioned in 1834. Connecticut's apportionment law is over 80 years old. Mississippi has not been

redistricted since 1892. Illinois since 1909. The districts from which representatives to the United States Congress are elected are due for re-drawing. Under Federal law the number of Congressmen allocated to each State is based upon the census that is taken every 10 years. In the event of changes in the representation the States are supposed to re-district. The law governing apportionment implies, according to President Truman, that the States will re-district after each census. Actually the dictatorship of small city slickers got together in 1911 and changed the apportionment law so that the State Legislatures could fool around with the Congressional districts. At one time Congressional districts were supposed to be composed of contiguous and compact territory. This provision was taken out of the law, with results that are plain if you will look at the Congressional district map of any State. The idea in general is to make each city vote (and each Democratic vote in most States) count for as little as possible and to make each small town vote and, to a lesser degree each farm vote, count as much as possible. The result has been that in one State, Ohio, one Congressional district includes 900,000 people, while another includes 175,000 persons. President Truman in one message to Congress declared that there were 50 districts in the country with populations of more than 450,000, and 50 others with populations under 250,000. This means that a person's vote in the heavy populated districts only counts for half as much (at the very most) as the vote of a person in a lightly populated district. President Truman asked that Congress pass a law setting standards which would bring about honest re-districting. Actually under the present law there is nothing to compel the States to re-district, or if they do to do the job honestly. Right now, for example, in Michigan, Democrats are entitled to eight representatives in Congress on the basis of their numbers. Actually, the small business men who control the Republican Legislature have the State jimmied up so that the Republicans have 12 seats in Congress instead of nine and the Democrats have five instead of the eight they should have.

In regard to the Senate the article states:—

The United States is of course the United States of America. Each State is supposed to be the equal of every other State. This equality appears in the Senate where each State is entitled to two senators, no more, no less. The result is today that the two senators from Nevada represent 79,000 people apiece. The two senators from New York on the other hand represent seven and a half million people apiece. One Nevadan has 100 times as much representation in the United States Senate as a New Yorker. In these days when the sovereignty of a State has relatively little meaning this kind of holdover from the past does not make much sense. But changing this situation will take a Constitutional amendment and long years of education against powerful propaganda for things as they are.

This shows that there is a rising feeling in America against gerrymandered districts, not only in regard to the various States, but in connection with Congress itself. It is hoped that before long there will be changes of a democratic kind. In this debate references have been made to the position in Switzerland, France and other European countries. I believe there is no more democratic State than Switzerland. I have a great admiration for the Swiss. I do not think there are better living or cleaner people anywhere. Go where you will there is no sign of poverty in that country. It contains only about 16,000 square miles and the population is 4,500,000. Only about 12,000 square miles are arable, but the remaining 4,000, which contains the Alps, bring wealth to the country because of the attractions to tourists. Much has been said of the hard-working Swiss people. I have inspected a number of estabments and industries there during a period of about six months on several visits, and, I find that the Swiss people do not work nearly as hard as Australians. Where there would be nine employees on a job here there would be 12 doing the same work in Switerland. The Swiss people have a greater appreciation of their leisure hours than we have. The political set-up in that country will be of interest to members generally, Some members opposite do not appear to be interested in electoral reform, but I do not care whether they are in the Chamber or not. I know that some of them cannot be here all the time.

Switzerland is founded on its member States, the cantons. They are, by the wording of the Swiss Constitution, sovereign in so far as their sovereign rights suffer no limitation by the Federal Constitution. The Swiss cantons are therefore not mere districts. They resemble to some extent the States of the United States of America, but their historical foundation goes much deeper, and they are genuine States, each with its own constitution and its own legislative and executive bodies. The fact that their democratic constitution is prescribed by the Federal Constitution is rather a confirmation of history than an act of their Federal Council. Their democratic character, however, rests on the solid foundation of the communes. Free citizens of 3,107 free communes constitute in their totality the sovereignty of the Swiss States. Swiss citizenship is primarily communal. Every Swiss has a home commune. It is true to obtain Swiss citizenship the consent of the Confederation must first be obtained. What really matters, though, is the decision of the commune to admit the new citizen. The commune is the cell in the organism of Swiss democracy. All

public activity has its origin here, and it is in every true sense of the word a school of citizenship. In the local self-government of the communes, every citizen can take part in the discussion and share in the work. The commune is the prototype of democratic organization. The small space of the commune is the given field of pure democracy. Here every citizen co-operates in every decision and all governing bodies are elected by the people's vote. Here the individual can see the source and significance of every decision. Here he can see the consequences of what he has done. The free commune is from the outset a vital element of the Swiss Confederation. It is from the commune that the Confederation draws its strength, and it is here that we can see the difference between Switzerland and countries which govern by means of centralized Governments. In Switzerland the national will grows from below upwards, and even State institutions are modelled on those which have stood the test on a smaller scale. The commune presupposes the liberty of the individual citizen. In its main features, that liberty has been guaranteed for the whole of Switzerland by the Federal constitution, in particular by what is known as the Proclamation of Liberties.

All Swiss citizens are equal before the law, and the constitution has expressly abolished all privileges of place, birth and family. On completion of his 20th year every Swiss becomes an active member of his commune, that is, he obtains the vote in all communal, cantonal and Federal affairs and is himself eligible for election. At the same time he becomes liable for military service in the Swiss militia, which carries on the tradition of an armed people in modern form. The citizen has the last word everywhere and his right to direct participation in the life of the State goes far beyond the right to elect the officials of the legislature and executive and in many cantons the judicature. Here the cantonal constitution is the final authority. For instance, in the canton of the Basle County, every law enacted by the cantonal council must be submitted to the people for approval in other cantons before the referendum may be brought into action. That means that if a sufficient number of signatures is collected by the citizens among themselves they have the right to demand that a law approved by the Legislative Assembly be submitted to the vote of the people.

The referendum and the initiative features of Swiss democracy, which are typical of its absolutely democratic nature, have been retained even in their Federal constitution. A Bill approved by the Federal Assembly must by the constitution be submitted to a referendum; it enters into force only if no petition is made against it after 90 days, but if a referendum is desired and a petition is submitted bearing the signatures of not less than 30,000 citizens, the final decision as to whether it becomes law rests with the people. The citizen has yet another means by which he can exercise the right of taking a direct part in the affairs of his country, namely, the initiative. By this means the people given the support of 50,000 signatures can demand that the Federal constitution shall be amended or totally or partially revised. In the cantons the public can, with a smaller proportion of signatures, propose amendments to the constitution as well as the adoption of new laws. Should the Federal constitution be amended, not only is the consent of the majority of the people required in every case, but a majority of the States or cantons must be obtained also. If this double majority is obtained the amendment automatically becomes law. The people as a whole are responsible for the election of the legislature—the Federal Assembly. One of the two chambers, the National Council, is representative of the people and is by the constitution so elected that there is one national councillor for every 22,000 citizens, each canton, even the smallest, having a representative. Every canton forms an electoral area.

When I was in Switzerland in 1947, 192 members were elected. It was calculated that 1,300,784 were eligible to vote. The seats were then, as the law prescribes, allocated among the parties according to their strength at the polls.. There is a system of proportional representation and after the result of the poll is declared the seats are allocated according to the number of votes polled by the various parties. The National Council election that year resulted in the Parties being represented as follows:—43 Catholic Conservatives; 47 Radicals; eight Liberal Conservatives; 22 members of the Party of Citizens, Farmers and Artisans; three Young Farmers; 56 Social Democrats; seven National Ring members; and six Democratic Party.

The second Chamber is called the Council of the States and is elected according to the legislation of the cantons either by elections or by the cantonal authorities. It consists of 44 members, there being 22 cantons with two seats each.

In Switzerland the collegial republic stands in contrast to the presidial republic of Americia and the manner of election of the Federal Council is entirely of Swiss origin. The Federal Council is elected every four years at the first session of the Federal Assembly after the election of the National Council. It consists of seven members and they are jointly responsible for the government as a collegial body, while exercising at the same time the functions of the head of the State, the same as the National Council. Every Swiss is eligible with the exception of the clergy, the only restrictions being that several citizens of the same canton cannot at the same time belong to the Federal Council. On the other hand the various regions of the country, languages, confessions and Parties are taken into consideration in the election of the council. Of the seven members of the Federal Council in 1947 three were Radical Democrats, two Catholic Conservatives and the other two were from the Party of Citizens, Farmers and Artisans, and the Social Democratic Party. Five were German-speaking, one French- and one Italian-speaking. There is no national Swiss language. The northern part of the country consists mostly of German-speaking people, the western part of French-speaking people, and the south-east of Italian-speaking people. One characteristic of the Swiss Government, both in the Confederation and in the cantons, is its stability.

Election to the Federal Council always means re-election of the members in office so long as there are no resignations. The Federal Council is responsible to the Federal Assembly, the representative of the people. The Swiss system of the formation of the political will of the State, with its reservations in favour of direct intervention by the people, may be complicated and cumbersome, but these draw-backs are amply compensated for by the solidity and stability which saves the country the costly adventures which other countries have to bear. So much has been said about Switzerland that I felt it would not be amiss to refer to it because in my opinion there is no more democratic country in the world nor a happier people.

Mr. Shannon—Is it not said that a moron is a happy man?

Mr. FRED WALSH—Many people are happy if left alone, and it is only when they are interfered with that they become unhappy. It has been suggested that the Labor Party has an objective in attempting to introduce this reform from time to time. That is true, but it is not from a Party point of view. We are concerned only about social and political justice, and that is the aim of the Australian Labor Party in moving as it has done. We are concerned with what is in the best interests of the people. The member for Mitcham implied that we were supporting the Bill for our own advantage, and that it was because we received such a terrible hiding at the last election. However, a few sentences later he mentioned that he was listening to the radio on the evening of the elections and felt very sad indeed and wondered what were the feelings of the members for Glenelg, Mitcham and Murray, whose seats were in jeopardy. We all imagined their feelings too. The fact remains we did not get the terrible hiding mentioned by Mr. Dunks, and are not expecting to receive any hiding at all on the next occasion. I appeal to members opposite to consider the Bill in the spirit in which it was introduced. It is not put forward because we know it will be defeated. Some members opposite suggested that they favoured some kind of electoral change, but just what they had in mind we do not know; nor do we know what the Government has in mind, but surely it must take notice of the two or three leaders published in the *News* regarding the urgent need for electoral reform in South Australia. Consideration must also be given to the views of a certain element in the Liberal Party which has advocated electoral reform, not from the point of view of Party advantage, but of political justice. The member for Torrens has an element within his district which had the temerity to suggest, as an item for the agenda of the last Liberal Party Conference, that a committee be set up to review the electoral position. There is a similar element in the district of Mitcham. There we have two of the most bitter opponents of the Bill who have elements within their districts which are advocating electoral reform. I ask honourable members opposite to forget Party interests, deal with the Bill on its merits and come to a decision what I feel would be in the best interests of the people.

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—A few minutes ago the honourable member for Thebarton indicated that he intended to give certain information about the Bill, but after a hurried conference with the member for Adelaide he said that apparently members opposite were not interested in what he was saying and therefore he would not give it. What he had to give us we do not know.

My mind went back to his opening remarks when he said:—

I am sure that the House, without prejudice, will agree that the speeches made on this side have been excellent. Not one could be considered poor, but I cannot say the same for speeches from the other side of the House. With apologies to Sir Winston Churchill I suggest that never has so much been said by so many that meant so little.

However, several hours later he said that members did not seem to be interested in what he was saying. Without reflecting on his speech—because I was interested in it—I believe his comparison should at least be considered and that the honourable member should read what he said at the beginning of his speech. He spent most of the last half hour in praising the electoral system in Switzerland, which is farther from South Australia than almost any other country mentioned by members on this side.

Mr. Lawn—The Premier took us farther away.

Mr. BROOKMAN—The member for Thebarton said there was no more democratic country than Switzerland, but I ask him, "Should women have a vote?" In Switzerland women have not a vote. If the honourable member considers that a fair system perhaps he will advocate it here. This is an important Bill for it seeks to amend the Constitution Act and would have far-reaching consequences. I agree with most other speakers that we should not consider it from the point of view of preserving what suits us and that we should not alter the Constitution for the benefit of other members. I do not claim that the electoral boundaries should be fixed and not altered under any circumstances, nor that the ratio between country and city electorates should never be altered. There is nothing sacrosanct about them, but the committee that allotted the boundaries in 1936 was not at fault. It acted fairly: the electorates were not gerrymandered. The committee was given fair instructions, and it followed them closely. I deny there was in any sense a gerrymander. All the clap-trap about gerrymandering has occurred in the last few years. There was scarcely any comment at the time the measure was passed.

Mr. Stephens—There was.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I know there was opposition to the measure, but I have read *Hansard* and found little protest about it. I agree that Mr. Lacey mentioned "gerrymander" on one or two occasions, but it was then forgotten.

Mr. Lawn—You hope it was.

Mr. BROOKMAN—It was many years before the Opposition began to squeak. I emphasize that the method of fixing electorates should not be on the basis of a mere counting of heads. That is not in the best interests of the State. To pretend that geography has nothing to do with an electoral system is evading the issue. Under the Bill each electorate would have an average number of voters of about 50,000. Perhaps one electorate would comprise many now adjacent to each other, and would include Stuart, Newcastle, Frome, Eyre, Flinders, Young, Burra, and Rocky River, but it would still be a few thousand short of the quota of 50,000. On the other hand, there would be electorates only a few miles in diameter in the more thickly-populated districts. The members in one district could traverse their areas in a few minutes in a motor car, but it would take other members days to get across theirs.

Mr. Stephens—Where did you get that idea? We suggested a committee to decide the boundaries.

Mr. BROOKMAN—I have grouped a number of electorates near each other to make up a total of about 50,000 voters, which is suggested under the Bill.

Mr. O'Halloran—Have you ever looked at the existing Legislative Council districts?

Mr. BROOKMAN—I will come to the Legislative Council later. Each of the proposed Assembly electorates would return five members, but a member for a large area would have little chance of getting around it. Probably the members for such a division would have to carve up the district between themselves and each attend to a small portion of it.

Mr. Shannon—That doesn't happen. Under the old system we had to travel around in convoys.

Mr. BROOKMAN—If they did not come to some arrangement they would not be able to properly attend to their electorates.

Mr. John Clark—How do the Federal members get around their districts?

The Hon. M. McIntosh—They don't, especially Labor members.

Mr. BROOKMAN—Unfortunately, there is a strong centralizing tendency in Australia today. It is idle to say that one Government has caused centralization or that another had a positive decentralization policy. Quite apart from the actions of Governments we must admit that the tendency to centralize is particularly strong. One of the basic causes is that only three per cent of South Australia has an annual rainfall of over 20 inches. We cannot ignore geography when deciding electoral boundaries; it must be considered

simultaneously with population. Huge distances, difficulties of communication, medical affairs, schools, electricity and water supplies present entirely different problems in the country compared with the metropolitan area. I have no sympathy with any move to depart from the well-founded principle of considering geographical factors along with population when fixing electoral boundaries. The Opposition has put before us the glories of mathematical precision, but where is it observed? I know of no other electoral system based upon mathematical precision. Members opposite have referred to the Federal electorates, but they cannot ignore the present method of electing the Senate. That nullifies their argument.

The Bill has several important defects. It departs from the principle of mathematical precision in one important respect and, under its own definition, is completely undemocratic. I refer to the method of settling deadlocks between the two Houses. Under the Bill there will be a joint sitting, but that is undemocratic because for every elector returning one Assembly member there will be two and a half for every Legislative Councillor. I would be surprised if Opposition members considered that democratic, and I would appreciate from them a simple explanation of that peculiar anomaly. I will not refer at any length to proportional representation for it has been dealt with at fair length already.

Mr. Quirke—It is not mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. BROOKMAN—No, but it has been in this debate. Mr. O'Halloran said that it would follow the passing of this Bill. Strangely enough, one or two of the speeches by Opposition members, including that by Mr. Dunstan, omitted any mention of proportional representation. Earlier in this debate the Premier, after referring to the fact that in Tasmania one Independent member was balancing the two Parties, said:—

When it was mooted that that Independent member had a desire to become a Senator I never saw any Government in Australia go into such a tailspin as the Tasmanian Government did, which decided it had to persuade him not to stand. When I asked why I was told, "Under proportional representation the next member would be a Liberal."

I do not think that even the Premier realized just how quickly his remarks regarding the Tasmanian system would be borne out by experience, for since then the Independent has apparently succumbed under his responsibilities and decided to resign. It appears that his successor will be a Liberal member, the effect of which will be to make it impossible for either Party to control the House and a general election will probably have to be held. This seems to me a cogent and timely answer to the suggestion that we should introduce proportional representation here. Some members appeared to be anxious to quote Sir Winston Churchill on this subject; indeed, the member for Gawler was one who quoted him. However, Sir Winston has not always considered proportional representation so wonderful, for, in *The World Crisis* (volume V.) after referring to Ireland, he says:—

In spite of the facical and indecent compact and the absurdities of proportional representation voting for the treaty was heavy.

Seeing that he has been quoted as favouring proportional representation, I feel I should mention this quotation. I am not always in favour of short quotations, but I feel that this quotation may balance the one used by the member for Gawler. By introducing adult suffrage for Legislative Council elections the Opposition would ruin the valuable work being done by that House, for it would reduce that Chamber to a strictly Party House in the same way that the Senate has been reduced to a Party House. I believe that if the Labor Party altered the Legislative Council franchise to adult suffrage, within a few years it would say, "This is only a second House doing the same work as the Lower House and elected by the same people. Why have it at all?" This Bill is merely the thin edge of the wedge. I feel that many Opposition members hope to go much further than has been suggested will be done by this Bill. The member for Port Adelaide, who has had much to say in the past about the Legislative Council and indeed about the State Parliament, said, when speaking on this Bill:—

My way would be to get rid of this undemocratic State Parliament where the privileged classes have the most powerful vote. Let us do away with the State Parliament and have one Parliament to govern Australia.

The honourable member made those remarks, not in the heat of the moment, but with a look of deliberation on his face.

Mr. Stephens—And I repeat them now, for I have always said that.

Mr. BROOKMAN—That shows how far the Labor Party wants to go. The Opposition says that this Bill is fairly harmless but in a few years' time it will take it a step farther and later another step, and we do not know what in a few years' time its final attitude to State Parliaments will be. Has any member considered the number of Parliamentarians who

will represent the elector if the Bill is passed. He will be represented by one member in the House of Representatives, 10 in the Senate, six in the Legislative Council and five in the Assembly—a total of 22. If he could recognize all those by sight he would not be badly off. It seems to me that that point has been only lightly considered and that under the system envisaged by members opposite the people would be over-governed and under-represented. When considering the distribution of electors members should not disregard geography, for that would be completely unjust to country people. I agree with Mr. Edmund Burke who said, "If I cannot have reform without injustice I would rather not have reform." I oppose the Bill.

Mr. QUIRKE (Stanley)—I cannot find myself in support of the Bill, although the principle of multiple representation is something I heartily support. It may be thought a waste of time to speak on a Bill such as this for it was doomed to be stillborn from the moment of its conception, but this debate gives members an opportunity to express their opinions on what is today a vital necessity. I hold—together with a number of members of the Liberal Party, I am glad to say—that some reform of the existing electoral system is necessary, but I cannot support the setting up of districts of the magnitude forecast in this debate. I agree with the members for Rocky River and Alexandra that such country districts would be unwieldy and that their adequate representation would be beyond the scope of even five members. I consider a three-member district would be admirable, both as regards size and representation. I will not go into how such a system could be evolved, for it would be only so much beating the wind and would need an inquiry which I heartily support in the same way that I support the necessity for another Federal convention to iron out the many difficulties which have arisen in Commonwealth-State relationships. We want a competent body set up by this Parliament to inquire into and recommend some re-alignment of the electorates and to say what should be done to remedy the present position. Members have heard good speeches from both sides, and two notable speeches were delivered by two of our legal luminaries—one on each side of the House—the members for Norwood and Torrens.

Mr. Davis—Where do you get off?

Mr. QUIRKE—As the member for Torrens has come in on the other side, what good can come out of him—is that it? There we hear the old Party line again. Am I to assume from the interjection that this is a Party line Bill? I said that both members delivered good speeches, and, if some members had not started to howl their protests I would have gone on to tell them that I agreed more with the member for Norwood than with the member for Torrens. There has been an undercurrent of heat in this debate. Several things were said that should have been left unsaid, but that sort of thing, I regret to say, is inseparable from Party politics. Party politics are inseparable from our present system of elections. Party politics are not very old. It is assumed by many people that we have always had them, but in Australia they began about 1892. In discussing the Bill Mr. Fred Walsh said that Independents in this place at one time were rewarded for their allegiance to the Government by being placed on Parliamentary committees. He implied that the Independents had a corrupt ideology. I deplore that sort of thing. Perhaps the honourable member did not mean it, but the inference was there. At one time I was a member of a Parliamentary committee, but when I ceased to be a Party man I did not remain on it very long. My place was taken by an estimable gentleman, and I have nothing against him, but with his limited knowledge of land matters I think he would have difficulty in distinguishing between a cauliflower and a sunflower, yet he became a member of the Land Settlement Committee with the full approval of both Parties. When members talk like this they should be very careful. In one sense I have no regrets at being ousted from the committee, but because I am keenly interested in the matters dealt with by it I have some regrets.

I agree with what Mr. Travers said about the representation of country areas, but he did not reply to an interjection which related to certain values being considered greater than human values. An equal population basis for the country and the city would not work and it would be highly dangerous, not so much to the country people, but to city people. A preponderance of votes in small areas which would dominate country interests would be extremely dangerous to the security of city people. In New South Wales there are 99 members in Parliament. The small area from Palm Beach to Wollongong is represented by 66, and the rural districts by 33. At present there is a strong movement for the creation of another State in northern New South Wales, to be known as New England. The idea is to have the capital at Armidale, which would be away

from the aggregation of the population around Sydney. That reform movement is borne of the domination of New South Wales by industrial interests in a small area. Of the total population of Australia, over 50 per cent is concentrated within 100 miles of Sydney and Melbourne. I do not want to have anything to do with electoral reform which will bring about an aggregation of population like that in Adelaide. Already the city is too big.

I cannot agree entirely with Mr. Travers that this proposed legislation is absurd. I do not support the Bill, but, taking a line on Mr. Travers' remarks, he thinks a proposal for three-member districts is as absurd as five-member districts. It is not absurd to attempt to do something that will, in its final effect, cause a debate such as the one we have had on this measure. Mr. Travers said, "Why have none of the giants of the past thought of this idea and expounded it?" That is extraordinary reasoning. One of the greatest things brought to civilization was the invention of the wheel, which took much of the burden from man's back. One man invented the wheel, another brought to light the principles of the lever, and another the screws. Why did not the giants of the past think of these things? Usually these things start in a minority way. Each usually comes from the brain of one man. The sort of reasoning used by Mr. Travers could be used against men like Louis Pasteur. He put forward the theory that in addition to the apparent animal, human and vegetable life on the earth was a microscopic life. We know little about it, but it affects every growing thing on the earth. Who were his greatest opponents when he put forward his theory? The giants of that day hounded him almost into obscurity. We have Grecian philosophy, Egyptian mathematics, Einstein and his theory of relativity, and Newton and his gravitation theory. Were these things condemned because the giants of the time did not think of them? We have also had the introduction of anaesthetics, and the prevention of pain at childbirth. Each of these things came from the mind of one man.

Now I come to the principle of one vote one value, which the Premier and other members ridiculed. If it is wrong, then we should take it out of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. In that legislation, irrespective of the holding, one man one vote is the order of the day. Under it the vote of one man has the value of one vote, and not a fraction of it. I have heard most of the speeches in this debate and I think the honours are even. Had the debate been applied to an analytical survey of the necessity for the reform it would have been better, but this unfortunate matter of Party politics has intruded itself all the time. It can be assumed that a system which puts one Party in power is regarded by that Party as a good system. We have the Labor Party in power in New South Wales and Queensland, but here in South Australia the system in a slight way favours the Liberals. I do not believe that under the present system Labor cannot win an election. It nearly won last time, and I forecast that it will win next time. At the last elections in this State the Labor Party was within 800 votes of winning four more seats. Mr. Travers is here by only a hatful of votes, Mr. Dunnage by a capful, and Mr. Pattinson by only a small majority. The same applies to other members. The Labor Party can win all right, but it has to put in horses for courses and not have candidates in country districts who know as much about the country as cows know about astronomy. I could tell honourable members opposite how they will lose the next time. There is one way in which the present system has proved wrong. At the last election 99,000 people were disfranchised. For instance, the district of Frome, represented by the Leader of the Opposition, has hundreds of electors 35 years of age who have never voted for the House of Assembly, and the same applies to your district, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Davis—How do you work that out?

Mr. QUIRKE—For 15 years there has been no election for Frome, and therefore a person who was 21 years at the last election would now be over 35. That condemns the system. Under a multiple system there would never be an uncontested seat, no matter whether there was proportional representation or any other form of voting. Consider, for instance, the districts of Rocky River, Young and Gouger. There are sufficient Labor votes in those districts to elect a Labor representative, and that is proved by the figures when the seats are contested. That fact alone condemns the present system. The Parties make up their minds whether districts like Burnside, Frome or Hindmarsh are to be contested, and the electors have no say unless a despised Independent stands.

Mr. Riches—What about Ridley?

Mr. QUIRKE—In that case both Parties decided it was not worth while—a compliment to the sitting member. Such a state of affairs is equally bad. Not that it is likely to happen,

but I would never wish to be elected without a contest, because it would go against my conviction that such things are a danger. In a district where there has been no election for 10 or 15 years, what interest have the people in the affairs of the State? Such a practice should not be persisted with for five minutes. I do not support the Bill's objective of providing cumbersome districts with five members each, but I do suggest that an inquiry is needed that will re-orientate the districts. I should like to have radiating districts which would embrace not only part of the city, but part of the country. The interests of the people in the city and the country are mutual. The city dwellers consume the products grown in the country, and should appreciate what takes place in the country from which their sustenance has its origin. More and more the people of the city are becoming divorced from the realization that they live and have their being because of the work done in the country, and that is a dangerous attitude. I do not agree with the member for Alexandra as to the franchise of the Upper House. The people who vote for the House of Assembly are affected by the legislation which ultimately must pass both Houses, and therefore they should have a voice in the election of the Legislative Council. It is degrading to continue a system which in effect says, "You, as a householder have a vote, but your wife, still being a relic of the chattel days, has not." Anyone not prepared to protest against that is unworthy to be called a man. We want to wipe the present blot off the map. This question of the wife having no vote for the Upper House may have been all right years ago when, under the law in England, a husband had the right to use a stick to beat his wife provided it was not above a certain size, and he did not hit her on the Sabbath.

Mr. Pattinson—That is fair enough!

Mr. QUIRKE—I think there must have been a big difference in wives in those days. I should not like to see some members opposite tell their wives that it was fair enough. I remember reading a book regarding the proposal to give Tasmania self-government. Documents passed backwards and forwards between that State and England and in one the advice was given, "Whatever is done, the Legislative Council must be elected on a restricted franchise of property rights in order to check the rising tide of democracy." That idea is still with us. The ideal of Edward Gibbon Wakefield in regard to South Australia was that there should be a prosperous landowner group, with semi-serfs under them and that attitude still persists as regards our franchise for the Legislative Council. The present franchise is an advantage to the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council, an advantage which the Labor Party cannot overcome as it can overcome the present voting system for this House. In order to maintain its supremacy the Party must maintain its supremacy as a right. Might is right in that case. The same principle applies to the Federal House. The Senate was intended to be a House of protection for the States, but has become a Party House. If the Labor Party or the Liberal Party in power decides on certain legislation, it has a Party meeting to agree to it, and its passing through Parliament is only a matter of form. Such a position is a farce, and everyone at Canberra knows it, and that is why we get incrimination, bitterness and personalities. The view is that it is not necessary to debate a Bill, but only to blacken other people's names. That is Party politics at is worst, but that is no worse in principle than the Liberal Party's attitude here to the Upper House. I cannot support the Bill, but if it were amended to provide for a committee to report to the House on electoral reform I could. Electoral reform is long overdue; it is necessary so as to restore the franchise of about 100,000 South Australians.

Mr. McALEES (Wallaroo)—I support the Bill. I had a speech prepared, but previous speakers on this side have covered most of the ground. All the good arguments on the Bill have been put by members on the Opposition benches. I have not been a member for many years, but I have heard some wonderful speeches by the Premier and the members for Burnside and Mitcham. However, those they made on this Bill were the worst I have ever heard from them. Their colleagues must have been greatly embarrassed, for they had no answers to the questions from this side of the House. The Premier could not face the barrage of questions, but had to continually turn round to his supporters to cheer them up by telling them, "We are all right." The member for Burnside took us all around the world in trying to convince us we are on the wrong track, but he failed. The member for Mitcham was most concerned. I imagine he was shedding tears when listening to the broadcasting of election results in March. He said the present electoral system should be examined, though he did not go as far as to say it should be altered. However, if it were left to the member for Mitcham

to make recommendations we would get a far worse system than we have at present. I have to be careful when speaking, for I only have to give the member for Mitcham a smile and he will ask that it be withdrawn on a point of order. Now I come to the remarks of the member for Torrens. Some of our legal members have much to learn when they get into Parliament. They are not in the Criminal Court here. Almost every time the member for Torrens has risen to speak he has addressed members on this side of the House as though we were criminals in the dock. We were looking for the member for Torrens last Wednesday, but we were told he was instructed to take a walk, and went walkabout. I suggest he read *Hansard* to see what we said last Wednesday about his remarks on the Bill. I was hoping for something great from a learned man, but all I heard from him has been about law courts, judges, juries or criminals. Not once has he brought up anything concerning the people that elected him. I hope he will pay attention to the remarks of members on this side for we have as much right to be here as he has. As the member for Stanley pointed out, only a handful of votes separated him from his opponent at the elections.

South Australians are looking for electoral justice. They want the majority to rule. Last week the member for Victoria put forward many strong arguments, but the *Advertiser* gave him little publicity because his views did not suit that newspaper. That shows how biased the *Advertiser* is. When Mr. Corcoran was quoting statistics about the number of electors in the various districts the Minister of Works continually heckled him. He said, "What about Wallaroo?" I admit Wallaroo has fewer than 16,000 voters, but I blame the Government for the reduction in its population, because it has taken everything out of the district and put nothing back. The Government believes in centralization, yet it preaches decentralization. The people will not be satisfied if the Bill is defeated. Sixteen men govern South Australia.

Mr. Lawn—No, one man.

Mr. McALEES—Yes, but he has to take a sidestep occasionally. Sixteen members of the Legislative Council returned by one-third of the people actually govern this State, yet members opposite say, "We are the Government elected by the people." South Australians will wake up one day and, if they cannot get democracy one way they will get it another. The member for Norwood mentioned conscience. Although I am satisfied that some Government members have a conscience, there are some who do not know the meaning of the word and the sooner they wake up to this the better it will be for them. I support the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHENS (Hindmarsh)—I support the Bill and wish to reply to some remarks of speakers this afternoon. The member for Stanley introduced himself as the Puritan of the House, not being associated with any political Party. He said that we should discuss the Bill without feeling and that unfortunately there had been some bitterness in the debate. I thought from his introductory remarks that we were to hear a speech in which he would analyse the subject in the fairest way and that in his usual courageous manner he would attack where he thought it was necessary to attack and be ready to face any reply to his remarks.

Mr. Macgillivray—Do you suggest he did not do that?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I do not merely suggest, I positively affirm, that he did not analyse the subject in the fairest way. He said that on his retirement from a political Party he was not permitted to remain long on the Land Settlement Committee and that his place was taken by one who would have difficulty in telling the difference between a cauliflower and a sunflower, but I remind members that the person who filled that vacancy and who is not here to defend himself today gave honourable service to his country and was a man of high intelligence—the late Mr. Les. Duncan. No credit is due to a man who attacks a dead man who has no opportunity of defending himself, and I was sorely disappointed with the member for Stanley in that regard. The member for Alexandra said that the present system was mildly questioned when introduced in 1936 and then forgotten, but I draw his attention to the remarks of the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Lacey, in 1936:—

It is only a sham democracy when elections are contested on unequal boundaries, and if the Bill is passed in its present form the sham will be even greater. It is so designed that the majority of people holding any particular political inclinations may have a small representation in this Parliament.

Mr. John Clark—How true his words proved.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes, and the member for Alexandra admitted that Mr. Lacey made some protest, but he said it was forgotten. In 1944 the Hon. John McInnes said:—

I now want to refer to South Australia's undemocratic electoral laws. The recent State elections once again showed how unsatisfactory they are. The system in vogue at present

does not return men to Parliament in accordance with the express will of the majority of the electors. It is clear that the present Government Party does not represent the majority of the voters.

Mr. McInnes went on to condemn the present electoral set-up. *Hansard* and press reports show that since 1936 there has been a continual condemnation of the present electoral system, and such words as "unjust," "undemocratic," and "inhuman" have been used in connection with it. I will reason with coolness for a little while longer, but, as I am so concerned about the democratic rights of the people, I know that any strong words that I use will be forgiven, for those who have strong ideals must sometimes use strong words to express them. However, while keeping within Standing Orders, my words will be moderate compared with my feelings on this subject. This Bill seeks to amend the Constitution Act, and members should try with unbiassed minds to see whether the conditions under the present Act amount to a gerrymander and to what extent they are undemocratic. Is the Bill in keeping with democratic ideals? Does it provide for equal opportunity for all political groups to gain equal representation in Parliament? I believe the implications bound up in those questions are part and parcel of the democratic system which will make possible Government over the people, for the people and by the people. Therefore, if it is found that the present system does not provide such Government it is wrong. Does the Bill provide for Government by the majority and the protection of the rights of the minority by their representation? Let us briefly examine the present system to see whether there is a need for some adjustment. In this debate many members have agreed on the need for some adjustment. Mr. Dunks said:—

I think there is some justification for examination of the electoral position.

The honourable member believes that the position is not as it should be. Mr. Michael said:—

I am prepared to concede that as the distribution of population has greatly changed, I am not opposed to the matter being considered to come more into line with the 1938 basis.

Mr. Heaslip said:

I agree with these statements and consider that there may be a need for electoral reform in South Australia because of the change in the incidence of population since 1938.

I agree with Mr. Brookman's remarks about a committee being responsible for the present electoral set-up. In introducing the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, 1936, which brought about the single electorate system, the Attorney-General, then the Hon. S. W. Jeffries, said, as reported on page 1096 of *Hansard*:—

I am carrying out the promise made by my Party. For some time the officials of the Electoral Department, at the request of the Government, have been engaged in preparing a re-division of the State into 39 single electorates. This scheme was referred by Cabinet to a committee consisting of His Honor Judge Paine, the Commonwealth Deputy Returning Officer for the State (Mr. N. V. Jeffreys), and the Surveyor-General (Mr. J. H. McNamara). The Government issued the following terms of reference to the committee:—

The Government policy is to reduce the numbers of the members of the House of Assembly by seven, and to divide the State into single electorates, preserving the present ratio of representation between the metropolitan and the extra-metropolitan districts, bearing in mind always the desirableness of electoral districts having a community of interest as far as possible.

The committee had no alternative in my opinion, and in the opinion of many other people, to do anything but divide the State into 39 electorates, keeping in mind the terms of reference. It brought about some interesting results at the 1953 elections. The Premier was elected to represent 6,430 electors, the Minister of Works 6,125, the Minister of Lands 6,395, the Minister of Agriculture 3,989, and the Speaker 4,218, making a total of 27,157 electors for five seats, which was 3,222 fewer than the 30,379 in the Port Adelaide district. In Onkaparinga there were 7,995 electors, Rocky River 4,719, Angas 6,391, and Gouger 6,640, a total of 25,745 electors for four seats, 45 fewer than the 25,790 in Goodwood. In Stirling there were 7,004 electors, Light 5,430, Burra 4,336 and Eyre 5,084, a total of 21,854 electors for four seats, 2,390 fewer than the 24,244 electors in Semaphore. These figures show that there was a gerrymander. In short, 13 Liberal and Country League members represent 74,756 electors, and three Australian Labor Party members 80,413. The Australian Labor Party members have only three votes, yet the Liberal and Country League members, with 5,657 fewer electors, have 13. Is this a just system? In 1938 the ratio of electors represented by a metropolitan member to the electors represented by a country member was 276 to 100, in 1941 it was 285 to 100, in 1944, 307 to 100, in 1947, 320 to 100, in 1950, 325 to 100, and in 1953 it was 327 to 100. This afternoon Mr. McAlees pointed out the evils associated with the matter. I remember the Premier being asked in this House whether he

would introduce a Bill for electoral reform more in keeping with democratic ideas, but he refused to do so because it would result in amenities being taken from the country. The present system has produced nothing but chaos and is most undemocratic. At the last State elections the Labor Party received 166,526 votes, and the Liberal Party 119,003, a majority for the Labor Party of 47,527, yet Labor is still in opposition. When the member for Norwood was speaking the Minister of Works asked whether all the votes cast in Port Adelaide were for Mr. Stephens. I think he puts his finger on something. I should like to know whether all the votes cast for the Premier in Gumeracha were actually for him. I feel that many voted for him because they refused to vote for a Communist. Many good Labor people were among this number. The position was the same in Albert. I was in that district during the election campaign and was asked on a number of occasions why the Labor Party was not running a candidate. I replied that we had no alternative. Many people voted for Mr. McIntosh because he was the lesser of the evils.

The Hon. T. Playford—Was there a Communist candidate?

Mr. HUTCHENS—No.

The Hon. T. Playford—The point was that in Gumeracha they had to vote for a Communist or vote for me. Now I understand you to say that they had to vote for Mr. McIntosh in preference to someone else.

Mr. HUTCHENS—The electors had to vote for the lesser of the evils.

The Hon. T. Playford—Were there not three candidates in that district?

Mr. HUTCHENS—Yes.

The Hon. T. Playford—Did not the same apply in a number of districts? Did not Liberals in Stuart have to vote for Mr. Riches rather than for a Communist?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I think I conceded the point. The people had no alternative.

The Hon. T. Playford—What is the use of bringing in an argument which you say is no good?

Mr. HUTCHENS—I am adopting the line of argument so often adopted by the Premier.

Mr. Frank Walsh—Why was it that I was the only retiring Labor member challenged by a Government representative—one out of eleven?

Mr. HUTCHENS—The only reply is that they are gluttons for punishment. Let us consider the seats held by the Parties in the House of Assembly following the last election and the electors represented. I think this will prove conclusively the undemocratic system operating today.

The Hon. T. Playford—You have already said that they were based on a number of assumptions that are not sound.

Mr. HUTCHENS—There are 14 Labor members in this House representing 220,987 electors, whereas the Liberal and Country League, with 21 seats, represents only 201,256, and the Independents 27,387. The Labor Party is in opposition with seven fewer seats than the Liberal and Country League, but represents about 19,000 more electors.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member has already said that those figures are not sound.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I have said nothing of the kind, and I wish the Premier would carefully listen to me as I always listen to him.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member brings forward an argument and then says it is not valid.

Mr. HUTCHENS—At the last elections nine members were elected unopposed, and it would appear that there was a plan to gerrymander the position and give an advantage to one Party. In five Liberal and Country League districts there were 43,695 electors, whereas four Labor members were elected, representing 51,426 electors.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member quotes figures for a particular time, but forgets that in the last Parliament the Liberal Party had a majority of the large seats and the Labor Party a minority.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I will probably have time to examine that before I finish my remarks. The figures dealing with the number of seats of each Party in the metropolitan area and the electors show there is discrepancy, because at the moment there are eight Labor seats representing 175,544 electors with an average of 21,943, whereas five Liberal and Country League members represent 103,658, an average of 20,731 The point is that wherever the Labor Party has been successful it seems to represent a greater majority of the people than the Liberal and Country League.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member forgets completely that the smallest district in this State is held by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. HUTCHENS—That is by design; it suits the purpose of the present Government and the political Party responsible for the

present system, which is gerrymander. The terms of reference to the committee appointed to examine the electoral districts were that it was to arrange for groups of people of community interests.

The Hon. T. Playford—That is in your own Bill; I do not think the honourable member knows what is in it.

Mr. HUTCHENS—The Premier is very busy putting a silk coat on something that is not very clean underneath. I am examining the present system to see whether some alteration is warranted. The first election that was held under the present system followed the 1933-38 Parliament. It was during the life of that Parliament that the Liberal Party took advantage of the division of opinion in the Labor Party and took the opportunity to extend the life of Parliament to five years without consulting the people.

The Hon. T. Playford—The honourable member cannot substantiate that. It was in the Government's policy speech.

Mr. HUTCHENS—It was not an issue at the elections and the Government did not have a mandate from the people. Another point associated with single electorates that must not be lost sight of is the fact that because there is only one member there is often no competition and it is therefore comparatively easy for the sitting member to defeat a newcomer or one who has been out of Parliament for a period. In the 1938 elections 15 Liberal and Country League, nine Australian Labor Party and 15 Independents were returned.

The Hon. T. Playford—That does not sound much like a gerrymander.

Mr. HUTCHENS—I thought I had made it pretty obvious; at that period the people showed considerable hostility towards Party politics and the actions of the Parties at that time.

The Hon. T. Playford—It was a Liberal Government that approved of the five-year Parliament, so why did the Labor Party have only nine members?

Mr. HUTCHENS—Unfortunately there was a division of opinion in the Labor camp, but in 1941, when there was a lessening of that hostility to Parties, we find that the Liberals returned 21 members, Labor 11 and Independents seven.

The Hon. T. Playford—Had Labor healed the internal breach by that time?

Mr. HUTCHENS—It was doing its best but had not quite completed the task.

The Hon. T. Playford—They did not make much effect on the electorate.

Mr. HUTCHENS—In 1944 there were 20 Liberal and Country League members, 16 Labor and three Independents, but it is of interest to note that all States except South Australia returned Labor Governments at this period, and in the Commonwealth elections at about that period Labor had 49 out of the 74 seats, which suggest that the gerrymander was so effective that, notwithstanding the swing towards Labor throughout the whole of the rest of Australia, it could not get a majority in this State. Coming to 1950 we find that there were 23 Liberal members, 12 Labor and four Independents and the Labor Party received a greater number of votes than the Liberal and Country League.

The Hon. T. Playford—Yes, it lost more districts.

Mr. HUTCHENS—Proving again the effect that the gerrymander can have upon Parliament. In 1953 the Liberal and Country League had 21 members returned, Labor 14 and the Independent four, and again in six States, and in all by-elections preceding the Senate election in the Commonwealth sphere, Labor was returned, yet in South Australia we cannot get a Government. The Senate elections which followed closely on the State elections showed that 219,628 people, or 53 per cent, in this State favoured Labor while 49 per cent subscribed to Liberal policy, clearly showing that the system denies the people the Government they want and therefore requires some examination. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.50 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 8, at 2 p.m.