

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, November 16, 1954.

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

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, intimated that His Excellency the Governor had assented to the following Acts:—Industrial and Provident Societies Act Amendment, Inflammable Oils Act Amendment, Police Pensions, Prisons Act Amendment, Swine Compensation Act Amendment and Vermin Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.**OIL REFINERY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.**

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier any further information to give regarding the proposal to establish an oil refinery in South Australia?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—No, except that continued interest appears to be manifest in the proposal. I have had a number of additional communications on the matter but I cannot take it further than I did previously. Two of the firms have indicated a desire that their interest in the matter should be regarded as confidential and their names not mentioned. Under these circumstances I feel it would be inadvisable to take the matter farther at present but there appears to be considerable interest from at least three sources.

RAILWAY CONTAINERS.

Mr. DUNKS—Believing that the Minister of Works would be absent today I had a talk with the Minister of Railways and he told me that he would look into a matter I intended to raise and probably have a report presented to the House today, as I consider the matter one of urgency. I have been given to understand that certain guaranteed tonnage contracts are entered into by the railways, principally with carriers for the transport of freight at stipulated rates. Between Adelaide and Melbourne a minimum of 1,000 tons per annum has to be sent and the consignor is allowed a certain type of truck for £90 to carry a maximum of 15 tons. This contract is extended between Adelaide and Sydney but the price is £15 per ton with a minimum loading of 16 tons, which is a minimum of £240 per truck. Further, the railways also permit the use of L.C.L. steel containers between Adelaide and Sydney. These containers are charged at the rate of £55 each and the maximum capacity

is 5½ tons weight. No annual contract is involved. In all cases the trucks and the containers are packed and loaded by the contractor who uses his own seal or lock and they are carried at the contractor's risk. It is understood that for some time the New South Wales Railways Commissioners have been pressing for the speedy return of these containers from Adelaide to Sydney. Can the Premier say:—

1. Has any contractor with the railways been permitted the use of steel containers between Adelaide and Sydney during the last 12 months at less than the rate mentioned?

2. If the answer is "yes," upon what conditions?

3. Has any contractor within the last 12 months been given the use of steel containers between Adelaide and Sydney marked "Department's convenience" or "Railways convenience," or words to that effect, and charged a lesser fee than £55?

4. If the answer to question three is "yes," will the Premier supply a list setting out the dates, names of the contractors concerned, the weights carried, the fees charged and the basis of calculation?

5. In the same event, can the Premier state whether such opportunities were offered to all contractors or whether preference to some contractors appears to have been apparent?

6. If the answer to question 3 is "yes," will the Premier indicate the officers who granted these concessions and upon what authority?

7. If the answer to question 3 is "Yes," will the Premier indicate whether any disciplinary action is required or whether there are any circumstances involved which might call for investigation by the Auditor-General or a public or departmental inquiry?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—If the honourable member will let me have a copy of his prepared questions I will get a report on the matter, I hope by tomorrow.

FISH MARKETING.

Mr. RICHES—Has the Minister of Agriculture obtained a report on the statement I read to the House on November 4 from Port Augusta fishermen regarding the closing of the Adelaide market to them?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have a report from the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. It is a long one, and I suggest that the honourable member peruse it without my reading it to the House. Its general purport is that there was no closed

market respecting the fish caught at Port Augusta, but simply a lack of a market. No one wanted the fish at any price because at that period—approaching the week-end—most of the purveyors of fish had sufficient to meet their market requirements and could not place these fish. As there are no facilities at Port Augusta for storing them under refrigeration there seemed to be nothing to do but release them, and that is what Mr. Moorhouse advised. He had, on behalf of the fishermen, fully explored the possibility of their being absorbed in the Adelaide market, but there was no opening.

Later:

Mr. RICHES—I thank the Minister of Agriculture for allowing me to peruse the docket on this matter, but in some respects the report he mentioned conflicts with statements made to me at Port Augusta this week. Can the Minister inform me whether the Adelaide fish market is a public market or privately owned, whether fishermen from country centres have any rights in connection with the auctioning of their fish in the market, and, if not, whether facilities are available in Adelaide for the disposal of fish rejected at that market? In view of the intense dissatisfaction that exists at Port Augusta, and complaints by fishermen that they have been shut out of the Adelaide market, will the Minister send an officer to Port Augusta to investigate the matter on the spot?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have information on these matters, particularly regarding the market available in Adelaide. At present there is a privately-owned auction market operating in Adelaide. Its proprietor does not purchase fish himself but auctions his clients' fish, and although I am not positive on this matter, I assume that any fish which came to him from private fishermen would be auctioned so long as there was a demand for it. I have no reason to doubt that he would accept all catches for auction if there were sufficient call for fish.

Mr. Riches—I have been assured that that is not so.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—That is my information, but I do not know whether or not it is according to fact. If the honourable member desires me to pursue the matter further I will do so. Fishermen can help themselves a great deal and many have done so by establishing co-operatives throughout the State. Today over 50 per cent of all fish, including crayfish, caught in South Australia are handled

through fishermen's own co-operatives. I think an attempt was made to establish one at Port Augusta not long ago but because of lack of interest by local fishermen the proposal did not come to fruition. Such schemes are the best means by which fishermen can overcome the difficulties they complain about.

CURRENCY CREEK SCHOOL YARD.

Mr. WILLIAM JENKINS—I have been advised that an application has been made to the Director of Education for the school yard at Currency Creek to be paved while the contractor is still in the district. The yard, which is graded and gravelled, is only 28 x 14 yards in area. There is no provision in the Estimates for this work, but will the Minister of Education consider the request that the work be undertaken this summer as the area becomes extremely wet for children in the winter.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Yes.

FELIXSTOWE ROAD BUS SERVICE.

Mr. DUNSTAN—A private bus, licensed by the Municipal Tramway Trust, operates on Felixstowe Road, Payneham. Recently, presumably with the concurrence of the M.T.T., the bus schedule was altered and now no bus operates at week-ends. This is the only transport available for old people at the Felixstowe Home, one of the largest old folks homes in South Australia, and the cancellation of week-end buses has resulted in their having no transport to get out to see their friends and their friends have no transport suitable for old people to visit them. Will the Premier take up this matter with the Tramways Trust to see whether some buses can be run at week-ends?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes.

REIDY PARK SCHOOL PLAYING AREA.

Mr. FLETCHER—Has the Minister of Education any information concerning the Reidy Park playing area? I understand an agreement has been reached between the Education Department and the Corporation of Mount Gambier regarding the use of that area for the benefit of children attending the Reidy Park School.

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I received a report this morning relating to this matter, but I do not think it is entirely satisfactory from the honourable member's viewpoint or that of the school committee. I prefer to examine it more carefully and reply more fully later in the week.

KAPUNDA SCHOOL: REMEMBRANCE DAY.

Mr. MICHAEL—In this morning's *Advertiser* is a letter purporting to come from the mother of children attending the Kapunda primary school, expressing deep concern at the action of the head teacher of that school in ignoring the two minutes' silence period on Remembrance Day. Has the Minister of Education any report on this matter?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—I read that letter with surprise and disappointment, because in the October issue of the *Education Gazette* appeared the following notice:—

Remembrance Day is 11th November, the anniversary of the armistice which ended the fighting of the First World War at 11 o'clock on 11th November, 1918. It is observed in memory of those who lost their lives in the First World War or in the Second World War. The Government desires that there shall be a complete suspension of all normal business, work and vehicular traffic throughout the State during two minutes' silence commencing at 11 a.m. on Thursday, 11th November, as a tribute of respect to the memory of those who fell. Teachers are asked to observe Remembrance Day in their schools. All should stand in silence at the prescribed time, and it is hoped that a suitable address will be given, explaining to the children the significance of the day. The flag should be flown at half mast between 10.30 a.m. and 11.03 a.m. and then at full mast again. Sunday, 7th November, is to be observed as a Day of Remembrance of those who died in the two World Wars, and heads of schools should make this known to their pupils.

I authorized that notice and, in my opinion, the Kapunda Primary School head teacher acted contrary to the instruction, and I am calling for a report on the matter. I consider that he has failed to appreciate the significance of the day, which is sacred to Australians. I know of no other instance in which teachers have not observed the Government's wishes in this matter.

NORTHFIELD MENTAL HOSPITAL PIGGERY.

Mr. JENNINGS—At the rear of the Northfield Mental Hospital there is an area where pigs are kept. Because of the building activity of the Housing Trust in the vicinity, the pigs are within a road's width of an established settlement. It is generally acknowledged that there is an unpleasant odour associated with pigs and I know from personal inspection that that is the position here, and serious discomfort and inconvenience results to people living nearby. Will the Minister representing the Minister of Health take up this matter with

the department with a view to possibly having these pigs transferred to an area where their presence will not be annoying to residents?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The Government has been advised on numerous occasions that it is beneficial to the patients of this institution to have some occupational therapy of some sort, and the farm at this hospital has been established on that basis. The purpose of the farm, of course, would be partly nullified if the activities were curtailed, but I will have the matter examined. I point out that it is not possible to shift the hospital every time houses are built alongside it.

EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE REPAIRS.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—The State Bank was good enough to accept responsibility in respect of damage resulting to State Bank homes from the recent earthquake, but there were some isolated cases where the damage did not show for some time after the closing date for lodging claims. Some damage has shown up only recently, and I ask the Premier to ascertain from the State Bank Board whether claims can be lodged at this stage and whether they would be favourably considered?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will ask the chairman of the State Bank Board to review the position. I am certain that he would not want to exclude any *bona fide* applications from consideration. However, I am prompted to point out that sometimes what one loses on the roundabouts he picks up on the swings, and some applications may have been made respecting damage that occurred before the earthquake.

SUBSIDY FOR DRIED FRUITS INDUSTRY.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—On September 21 (page 648 of *Hansard*) and on October 13 (page 962) I directed questions to the Minister of Agriculture regarding a subsidy for the dried fruits industry. This is a matter of the utmost importance to South Australia, which has invested much money in the production of dried fruits, and to the soldier settlers who have started production under difficult conditions. Has the Minister received a report from the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, and is the report available?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I have received the following reply from the Acting Minister for Commerce and Agriculture:—

Representatives of the dried fruits industry submitted a number of proposals, each involving some form of Commonwealth assistance

to the industry. Included amongst these proposals was a request for Commonwealth financial assistance to the extent necessary to bring returns from dried vine fruit of the 1954 season, which had been sold in the United Kingdom, up to the level of cost of production. The Commonwealth Government decided that a case for Commonwealth financial assistance had not been established for the following reasons:—

- (a) While the industry was experiencing a real problem of cash shortage due to the slow sales of the 1954 crop, it was by no means clear (with a substantial part of the crop unsold) that the ultimate realization would be of a level which would justify Commonwealth financial assistance to the whole industry.
- (b) The Ministry of Food has agreed to underwrite at certain price levels the whole of the fruit from the last crop sold in the United Kingdom up to March 31, 1955.
- (c) The Commonwealth Government, acting on the request of the industry, has pressed the United Kingdom Government to extend the period during which the guaranteed minimum return for Australian fruit shall apply. This request is still under discussion with the Ministry of Food. Recently the rate of sales, which has been disappointingly slow, has increased considerably and prices being received at present do not establish a case for subsidy.
- (d) Whilst a subsidy cannot be approved, the Commonwealth will press for an arrangement which will ensure a minimum guaranteed return for the whole of the last crop. Beyond this the Commonwealth will study the possibility of an arrangement for future years under which advances to growers may be available soon after harvest, against the value of their crop, pending realization.

The Government had considered the request on dried fruits only after a full documented case had been presented on behalf of the dried fruits industry by authoritative representatives of that industry. The Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics had made an independent assessment of the circumstances of the industry as well as making a study of the cases submitted by its representatives. It was with the aid of the assembly and analysis of all available facts that the Commonwealth Cabinet had considered the request. Mr. McEwen was to discuss the dried fruit problems with the United Kingdom Ministry of Food in the course of his discussions in London, including the question of competition of subsidized foreign fruit and the general question of tariff preferences.

GRAIN FEED FOR STOCK.

Mr. PEARSON—Last Thursday a disastrous wind storm swept the State and losses, particularly in barley crops, were extremely heavy.

I have no doubt that many farmers will attempt to recover some of their losses by turning stock on to their barley paddocks. I was reliably informed yesterday that some crops of up to 40 bushels an acre are a total loss, which means that 40 bushels an acre of raw grain are on the ground. Experience has shown that there are methods that can be adopted whereby stock can be introduced safely into such paddocks, and I ask the Minister for Agriculture whether he will instruct the Director of Agriculture to make a press statement or give a radio talk outlining to farmers the safe methods.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I think many farmers already know the safe methods and practise them, but for the benefit of those who do not I shall be glad to have the information disseminated.

METROPOLITAN TAXICAB CONTROL BILL.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Like many other people, I was perturbed to read a statement in last Saturday's *Advertiser* that the Metropolitan Taxicab Control Bill may not be finalized this session, and I ask the Premier whether there was any foundation for the report and whether the Government intends proceeding with the Bill?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD.—The report, which I did not see, was presumably written by a political correspondent and possibly based on the low position of the Bill on the Notice Paper. I am at present investigating this matter through the Prices Branch. That investigation has been proceeding for two weeks, but until it is completed I will not be in a position to indicate what Cabinet's decision may be. I can only say that the fact that the Bill is at the bottom of the Notice Paper, has no significance at the present time.

SCHOOL LAVATORY ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. FLETCHER—The present sanitary arrangements at the Mount Gambier High School are the same as when the school was established and quite inadequate for the present number of scholars. As the position has been deteriorating for over three years, can the Minister of Education say whether his attention has been drawn to it and when steps will be taken to relieve it?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—The matter has been referred to me, and it appears from a report that I received this morning that it is urgent but that no funds are available on this year's Estimates for the provision of an additional lavatory block. I have, however, asked

the Architect-in-Chief to have the necessary plans prepared with a view to calling for tenders early next financial year, and I hope the item will be placed high on the priority list of minor works for that year.

PETERBOROUGH HOUSING.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Has the Premier a reply to the question I asked recently about the slow progress being made on the construction of Housing Trust homes at Peterborough?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—The ten rental houses being constructed for the Housing Trust at Peterborough are virtually completed except for painting and some minor matters. The contractor has had difficulty in securing a painting sub-contractor, but now expects painting to commence during the week commencing November 7. Subject to there being no further hold-up, it is expected that the first pair of houses will be completed by the end of November. Thereafter houses should be completed at the rate of about a pair a fortnight.

NEW TYPE RAIL CAR.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Recently in reply to a question regarding the new type of rail car being used by the Railways Department, particularly on the Morgan line, the Premier said that the department was investigating the question of whether it could legally revoke the contract for the supply of certain faulty parts for the rail car and substitute other parts. Can he now say whether the Crown Solicitor's opinion on this matter has been received and whether any further action is contemplated?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Together with the Minister of Railways I inspected some of the components of the gear boxes in question, and I found them to be most unsatisfactory; but whether that constitutes a ground for termination of contract is a question I could not personally answer; it is a matter for legal opinion. The cars are ready for service but the gear boxes are proving to be entirely unsatisfactory. The Government is taking immediate action by calling for contracts for the supply of approved gear boxes which are available from other sources, and tenders have been received. Whether we will be able to get damages from the original firm is a matter on which I cannot yet answer the honourable member. I have discussed the matter on the highest possible level with French authorities, and the Crown Solicitor will take whatever legal action he can.

PLANTINGS OF LEXIA GRAPES.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY—The following is an extract from the July-September issue of the *Australian Dried Fruits News*:—

Ministers of Agriculture in the various producing States have been approached on the need to control further plantings of lexias. Replies revealed that the opinion of Ministers concerning expansion varied somewhat, although all expressed awareness of the need for careful planning.

I was of opinion that there had been no extension of any kind in any State without the most careful planning by experts of the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and that South Australia had not used a considerable portion of the acreage allotted to the State. In view of this, can the Minister of Agriculture say how he replied to the letter he received from the Australian Dried Fruits Association?

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—Following on the receipt of the letter I obtained the following report from Mr. Strickland, Chief Horticulturist:—

During the initial discussions and investigations on new plantings for war service settlements some years ago the outlook for new areas of vines for lexia production appeared bright. At that time the Australian Dried Fruits Association suggested a bias towards muscat, gordo and malaga vine varieties, in view of the unsatisfied demand for lexias. War service settlement plantings of drying grapes in South Australia now total approximately 2,000 acres, of which 925 acres are gordos and 78 acres malagas, both lexia grapes. For schemes so far approved, 340 acres of drying grapes remain to be planted, of which approximately 50 per cent would be lexia grapes. However, 1954 plantings will only total approximately 68 acres of lexia grapes. The full S.A. allocation of drying grape acreage for war service settlement as approved by the Australian Agricultural Council is 5,000 acres, of which only 1,988 acres have been planted and only 2,328 acres are comprised in schemes so far approved. In view of the position outlined in the letter from the A.D.F.A., it would appear that we should approve the suggestion that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics should examine and report upon the market prospects for lexia grapes. Meanwhile, proposed plantings in South Australia of this type of grape during 1954 cannot be interrupted, but do not comprise an area large enough to effect materially future prospect for lexia marketing.

It was in those terms that I replied to the letter.

DESIGN OF TIMBER HOUSES.

Mr. CORCORAN—Has the Premier obtained the report he promised on November 4 about the intention of the Housing Trust to erect in

country towns timber homes of the new design decided on for the satellite town near Salisbury?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—Yes, in the following terms:—

Wherever it is practicable the new design for timber-frame houses will be used by the South Australian Housing Trust in country towns generally.

MINOR SCHOOL WORKS.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Has the Minister of Education obtained a report on the matter of minor school-works that I raised on November 4?

The Hon. B. PATTINSON—Through the Minister of Works I have received the following report from the Architect-in-Chief:—

1. The authority given to district schools inspectors and school committees by the Education Department under that department's vote account is limited to emergency work, *e.g.*, urgent plumbing, leaking roofs, etc. This department's building inspectors are given authority to act in emergency cases to any extent necessary to meet the situation without limitation. If very heavy expenditure were involved they would obtain approval to act by telephone.

2. With respect to ordinary maintenance requirements, this department's district building inspectors are given authority to enter into local contracts for work which is urgent, but not of an emergency nature, up to £35. These officers are stationed at Port Lincoln, covering the whole of Eyre Peninsula, Port Augusta, covering the northern areas, and Mount Gambier, covering south-eastern districts. All inspectors have authority to enter into contracts of £10 without approval for any maintenance work.

3. It is considered to be undesirable to allow building inspectors to enter into contracts for ordinary maintenance work over the above figure. In fact, the audit regulations require that the prior approval of the head of the department shall be obtained before entering into contracts up to £50 and that the prior approval of the Minister must be obtained before entering into contracts exceeding £50. In practice the building inspectors obtain local quotations for amounts up to £250, and submit them for sanction (which is given immediately where the head of the department is satisfied) and Ministerial sanction is obtained on a monthly schedule. Where work is to be carried out departmentally the approval of the Architect-in-Chief only is required to any figure. This procedure involves building inspectors in little more clerical work than would be involved if their authority were extended, as in those circumstances it would be essential for control to be maintained for them to report on contracts arranged.

4. Expenditure on school maintenance this financial year to October 31, 1954, indicates there is no inability to get work done by this department, to the extent that funds are made available. The amount provided in the Revenue Estimates of Expenditure for this

purpose for the current financial year is £235,000. To October 31, 1954, the expenditure was £87,182, or approximately £9,000 in excess of the quota for the four months.

In an accompanying report the Deputy Director of Education draws attention to the fourth paragraph of the report of the Architect-in-Chief and says that there appears to be no difficulty, therefore, in having minor works done, particularly in view of the recent approval to utilize school councils and committees in obtaining quotations. I ask the honourable member to examine the reports in detail and if he is then not satisfied to ask another question, when I shall be glad to confer with the Minister of Works.

RENTS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSES.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (on notice)—In determining the rents of Government-owned houses, did the Housing Trust, where applicable, work on the basis of the rents actually charged for such houses as at September, 1939, or on the basis of the average rents charged for comparable premises at that time?

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—When recommending rents of Government-owned houses, the South Australian Housing Trust adopted as its basis the general rental levels prevailing at September 1, 1939, with respect to comparable houses in the particular locality and not the actual rent of the houses. In point of fact, in very many cases, the rents actually charged in 1939 for the houses in question were substantially lower than the general rental level at that time.

CATTLE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

LAND DEVELOPMENT: HUNDRED OF SHORT.

The Speaker laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement on land development in the Hundred of Short (South-East).

Ordered to be printed.

WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. T. Playford for the Hon. M. McINTOSH (Minister of Works) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Waterworks Act, 1932-1936.

Motion carried.

Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House. Bill introduced and read a first time.

The Hon. T. Playford for the Hon. M. McINTOSH—I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time. It deals with the rating of country lands under the Waterworks Act, and its object is to enable the amount of the rates to be fixed from time to time by the Minister of Works. Under the present law country lands are subject to rates based on the acreage and unimproved value of the land, in accordance with a scale set out in the Act. The scale was fixed in 1925. The rates vary from 4d. to 7d. per acre according to the unimproved value. The minimum of 4d. per acre is payable where the value does not exceed £2 2s. 5d. and the maximum rate 7d. per acre applies to land of a value of £3 7s. 6d. an acre, or more. The Government is of opinion that this scale, fixed nearly 30 years ago, is out of line with modern requirements and should be altered. Since it was fixed, costs have increased three-fold. Before the war the amount received from a 7d. rate was sufficient to pay interest on a 3in. main, but it is now impossible to construct any main at such a cost that the rates will pay interest. The rates are not even sufficient for the running costs. Another consideration which favours an increase in the rates is that such an increase would enable mains to be extended to many farmers still needing water without imposing an increasing burden upon the State's financial resources.

The Government has obtained full reports on this matter from the Engineer-in-Chief, who strongly supports the proposal that the rates should be increased. The Bill therefore empowers the Minister of Works to fix rates on country lands from year to year by a notice in the *Gazette*. Thus the method of fixing and altering these rates will become the same as the method of fixing and altering rates on city and township properties from which by far the greater part of waterworks revenues is derived. The Bill at the same time enables the Minister to define the lands on which the rates are to be payable. It has not been the practice to rate the whole of the land in a country lands water district. Only the lands which are near enough to a water main to benefit from the main or to be capable of benefiting from the main have been rated. These lands are at present defined in the schedule to the principal Act which fixes the scale or rates. The Bill repeals the schedule and provides for the rateable lands to be defined in future by the Min-

ister by the notice fixing the rates. This will enable the rates, as before, to be levied on only those parts of country lands water districts which are near to water mains.

Mr. Macgillivray—What does “near to water mains” mean? I think it should be “contiguous to water mains.”

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I will get from the Engineer-in-Chief precise details about the rating system and the differences that will be made by these amendments.

Mr. O'Halloran—I thought that lands one mile on either side of a water main were rated.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understood so, and that such lands were rated even if reticulated water was not being used on them.

Mr. Macgillivray—I think that “near to water mains” would be a matter of opinion, and that the interpretation would vary.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I understand the honourable member's point, and I will get more precise details on the proposals for him. I may even have the information here in a docket. The Bill makes the necessary amendments to the principal Act for the purposes which I have explained. The amendments will provide for the rating of country lands on the same principles as have been followed in the past, with the exceptions that the amount of the rate will be fixed by notice in the *Gazette* instead of by the Act and that the lands on which the rate is payable will also be defined by the notice instead of by the Act. The Bill will apply to this year's rates as well as to rates in future years. At the same time the opportunity has been taken to make some amendments of the principal Act in the nature of statute law revision. These amendments do not alter the policy of the Act, but are desirable in view of changed ministerial and official titles, and for the purpose of clarifying the Act.

Mr. O'HALLORAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS (REDIVISION) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 19. Page 1045.)

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—If we did not know the real reason for the so-called electoral policy of the Liberal and Country League, we would not believe it possible that the Government could bring down such a Bill as this. In view of the widespread dissatisfaction following the gerrymander perpetrated in 1936 and persisted in ever since—

dissatisfaction that has even been voiced within the ranks of the L.C.L. itself—it is difficult to understand how the Government could have the effrontery to propose now that the existing electoral injustice should be perpetuated. The Premier said that it was “not the Government’s policy to make radical changes in the electoral system.” He meant, of course, that it was not the policy of the L.C.L. to change in any way a system designed to guarantee its return to office; and, we might ask, what moral right has the L.C.L.—merely because it happens to be the Government—to insist on the maintenance of a system that is the negation of elementary electoral justice? Rather, it should be the Government’s duty to propose an electoral system that would enable the people to express their wishes effectively through the ballot box—not to persist in preventing them from doing so.

While the Government proposes to retain an iniquitous system, under which more than 60 per cent of the people have one-third of the representation in Parliament and less than 40 per cent have two-thirds, it is nevertheless, in one sense, proposing to make very radical changes. Instead of continuing to support a distribution under which one metropolitan enrolment is well over 32,000 and another about 12,000, it proposes to bring all metropolitan enrolments within 20 per cent of the metropolitan average; and instead of a distribution under which one country enrolment is about 3,600 and another nearly 12,000, it proposes to bring all country enrolments within 20 per cent of the country average. Surely, in view of the Government’s previous opposition to all suggestions we have made on this subject, this decision represents a revolutionary change! To be consistent, the Government should do nothing at all about the glaring anomalies that have existed for years, but just allow them to continue. Why should it bother to bring in a Bill to make enrolments in the respective areas “approximately equal” within the meaning of that expression, as defined in the Bill? The answer, of course, is that some of the districts are not manifesting as positively as they should that “community of interest” which they were intended to have under the original L.C.L. plan. If the L.C.L. had not lost two metropolitan seats, and nearly lost three others at the last elections, we probably would not have heard anything about a redivision at all; and this makes it particularly important to realize the true significance of this Bill.

At first glance it might seem that the Government was proposing to implement the very principle of one vote one value which we have advocated for years and which the Government has rejected every time we have suggested it. But a careful study of a provision contained in subclause (2) of clause 5 will soon disabuse the minds of those who might have been deceived into thinking that the L.C.L. has had a change of heart in this respect. The relevant part of the sub-clause reads as follows:—

For the purpose of this Act Assembly districts within the metropolitan area shall be regarded as being approximately equal to each other if no such district contains a number of electors more than twenty per cent above or below the average of the respective numbers of electors in all such districts.

Mr. Hutchens—A scientific jugglery.

Mr. O’HALLORAN—A scientific gerrymander.

Mr. Dunks—I think the principle in this part of the Bill was taken from the honourable member’s Bill.

Mr. O’HALLORAN—No. In my Bill I sought to establish a just and well-trying principle which has been the practice under the Commonwealth electoral laws for more than 50 years, and I did not seek to apply it to a particular section of the State, with the exception of the sparsely populated northern areas. The part that I just quoted applies only to the metropolitan area. Although this is ostensibly the same as the relevant provision contained in the Federal Electoral Act (and included in every Bill which Labor has introduced in this Parliament for the purpose of achieving practical electoral justice) it is entirely different both in wording and in spirit from that provision. The Federal Electoral Act prescribes the quota as the basis of a distribution to be recommended by the commission and implies that any considerable departure from the quota must be justified by such *bona fide* considerations as community or diversity of interests, means of communication, physical features and existing boundaries. The 20 per cent limit provided in that Act is to be resorted to only when abnormal conditions warrant such an extreme departure from the quota, and the distribution commissioners appointed under the Act are not entitled to go to that extreme merely because they may do so. The corresponding provision in the Premier’s Bill, however, places no such restriction on the commission proposed to be set up, but rather invites it to make some district enrolments as much as 20 per cent

above and others as much as 20 per cent below the quota for no other reason than by doing so it will create as many L.C.L. districts as possible.

In view of the fact that the metropolitan area is to be "re-divided" quite separately from the country, there does not seem to be any justification whatever for providing for a margin as great as 20 per cent. The density of population in this area can be regarded as uniform for the purpose of electoral distribution; and such things as accessibility, means of communication, physical features, etc., cannot be regarded as factors that have to be considered in determining metropolitan districts. It is therefore quite obvious that the Government intends where necessary to use the full 20 per cent margin in the metropolitan area for the purpose of creating districts containing L.C.L. majorities in localities that will just qualify for recognition as districts—that is, just within the lower limit permissible—and grouping Labor majorities in districts just within the upper limit. Thus the 20 per cent margin is to be used in perpetrating an additional gerrymander within the metropolitan area, which, in view of the gerrymander already in existence in the disproportionate representation of city and country, cannot be too strongly condemned.

The scope for gerrymandering that this Bill affords will be clearly indicated by the following figures. The quota for the metropolitan area will be approximately 22,000. Twenty per cent of this number is 4,400. Thus a metropolitan enrolment, as determined by the proposed commission could be as large at 26,400 or as small as 17,600. That is, one enrolment could be 8,800 larger (or smaller) than another. This range of difference is, as I have said, out of all proportion to the purpose which the provision for a margin is intended to serve. There are few, if any, valid reasons for making any considerable differentiation between metropolitan enrolments under a scheme such as is proposed in this Bill. Any *bona fide* purposes intended to be served by the provision of a margin at all could be served quite adequately by a maximum of five per cent, or even less. A five per cent margin would allow an enrolment to be as small as 20,900 or as large as 23,100—a range of 2,200, which should be sufficient to accommodate any of the factors that ought to be taken into consideration in determining any particular enrolment.

It may be objected that my Bill provides for a 20 per cent margin and therefore I should not oppose the provision of a 20 per cent

margin in this Bill. But, apart from the point I have already made regarding the peculiar interpretation the L.C.L. places on the expression "common interests" and the obvious intention of that Party to perpetuate its gerrymander within the metropolitan area, there are two important differences between the two Bills. Under my Bill the metropolitan area and most of the rest of the State are grouped in one zone, and it is most likely that, as a result of the distribution provided for, those districts, if any, which would fall entirely within the metropolitan area would have to be so determined as to contain the maximum enrolments permissible under the 20 per cent margin provision. Those enrolments would no doubt be so determined in order to accommodate the wider dispersion of population and other factors tending to reduce enrolments in other parts of the State. Under the Premier's Bill, however, this position will not arise and consequently there is no real reason why any of the metropolitan districts should vary considerably from the quota.

Again, the provision of a margin of 20 per cent, included in the Federal Electoral Act and in Labor's Bill, is intended to accommodate changes in the distribution of population that might occur after any given electoral distribution. When more than a given number of districts cease to be within the prescribed limits, it is provided that another redistribution shall take place. The 20 per cent maximum variation from the quota was thus introduced with a view to ensuring an occasional redistribution but also with a view to obviating the necessity of having such redistributions too frequently. But there is no provision whatever in the Government's Bill for this occasional adjustment, and therefore there is no real justification for the adoption of the relatively extreme margin of 20 per cent, especially in reference to the metropolitan area.

There is, of course, not the same objection to the application of the 20 per cent margin to country districts, to which the various factors warranting departures from the quota may fairly be deemed to be applicable. The Government is opposed to "radical changes," but is that a good reason why we should not have some change in the electoral system itself? Although we do not expect the Government to accept our idea of democracy, we have a right to expect that the Government will come part of the way towards a fair and reasonable electoral system, even if it is only to restore the position that obtained in 1936.

Another alleged reason for perpetuating the existing gerrymander is that "if all parts of the State are to be effectively represented in this Parliament, it is not possible to have country electorates with the same number of electors as metropolitan electorates." But the L.C.L. has never explained why there must be such a degree of inequality as there is between metropolitan enrolments and country enrolments to ensure that all parts of the State shall be effectively represented. The L.C.L. is the only political party that insists on an electoral system based on the so-called principle of city *versus* country without any relation whatever to the population of those areas, although even some of its own members are now beginning to protest against the retention of this electoral policy.

The L.C.L. has never explained why there should be a distinction at all between what it is pleased to call the "metropolitan area" and "the country." On what basis is this distinction founded? Is it supposed to be occupational?—because if it is, I would point out that all concentrations of population outside the metropolitan area are not rural. Whatever the reason for the distinction, we may ask how extensive the metropolitan area has to become before the people living therein qualify for more than one-third of the representation in Parliament. This distinction between the metropolitan area and the rest of the State is essentially an artificial one. Whatever justification there might have been for it a hundred years ago—and I do not admit that there was ever any justification for it—none exists today. Actually, we know that it is being perpetuated for purely party purposes. For a long time now it has been based on the fact that, generally speaking, more people in the country vote L.C.L. than Labor and more people in the metropolitan area vote Labor than L.C.L. That is the only reason why the metropolitan area is so defined, and that is the only reason why it has 13 members representing it in the House of Assembly and the rest of the State has 26. That is why this Government is concentrating more and more people in the metropolitan area, where their votes will be less effective against the L.C.L.

The setting off of the metropolitan area against the rest of the State is entirely against the interests of the people. It serves to create and accentuate unnecessary opposition as between the people living in the two areas. It is impossible to find any justification whatever for the L.C.L.'s arbitrary two-to-one ratio of representation, unrelated to population. There

is no political philosophy underlying it. But if it is thought that for purposes of stimulating political interest and activity among the people of this State, the metropolitan population should be pitted against that of the rest of the State, why not make the representation of those two areas approximately equal—that is give the metropolitan people the same number of representatives as the country people? Even if the L.C.L. honestly believes that it is "not possible to have equal metropolitan and country enrolments," why should it be necessary to have an average metropolitan enrolment about $3\frac{1}{2}$ times an average country enrolment? The answer, of course, is that that is the only way in which the L.C.L. can retain its stranglehold on the Parliament of this State.

Are we to suppose that, no matter what the relative populations of the two areas, there must always be two country members to each metropolitan member? In every other State where a distinction is made between the metropolitan area and the country, there is at least some expressed or implied relationship between the number of electors in each such area and the number of members representing them and the population of an area is the basis for the determination of the number of members it is entitled to. We have been informed that the Bill makes provision "for the maintenance of the existing relation between city and country representation." But what is the existing relation? Over the last 18 years it has been continually changing. Eighteen years ago it was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. It is now about $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. When it becomes, say, 4 to 1, will that be the "existing relation" to be preserved in another "redivision"?

When the 1936 gerrymander was perpetrated, the L.C.L.'s insistence on two country members for each metropolitan member made a country vote worth about $2\frac{1}{2}$ metropolitan votes—in other words, an average metropolitan enrolment was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times an average country enrolment. That was bad enough, but even if it were restored, we would have, on present-day enrolments, a ratio far less undemocratic than the ratio we have now and are to be condemned to tolerate under L.C.L. policy until the next redivision. But if the number of metropolitan seats were increased from 13 to, say, 18, and the number of country seats were increased from 26 to 27—which I would suggest as a practical means of restoring the 1936 relationship—a representation ratio slightly lower than the 1936 ratio would be established. Actually, it would be 2.48 to 1,

as compared with 2.74 to 1. Such a relationship would still be very much in favour of the country population—as a matter of fact, more favourable than in any other State—and on an absolute basis of representation the country population would have three members for every two representing the people in the metropolitan area. Such a relationship would not only be a little closer to the democratic ideal but would also, among other things, give the Premier a greater opportunity than he has now under the existing electoral system to prove whether he retains the confidence of the people of South Australia.

The considerable increase in population since 1936 warrants an increase in the membership of the House of Assembly such as my suggestion involves. The present membership is far too small. Only Tasmania has a smaller Lower House than we have—and, incidentally, our population has grown more rapidly in recent years than that of any other State. My Bill, which is still before the House, provides for a membership of 45, which, in my opinion, is not too large. The total enrolment for the State in 1936 was 352,221. Today it is 460,292. In 1936 the metropolitan enrolment was 203,647 and the average enrolment for the 13 districts was thus 15,665. Today the metropolitan enrolment is 286,756, the average enrolment per district being 22,054. In 1936 the total country enrolment was 148,674, the average enrolment for the 26 districts being 5,718. Today the total country enrolment is 173,536, the average enrolment being 6,674. If the number of members of the House of Assembly were increased to 45—and the proportion which I have suggested were adopted—a metropolitan member would represent an average of 15,931 electors and a country member would represent an average of 6,427 electors.

I turn now to another aspect of the L.C.L.'s electoral policy. This is expressed in the assertion that the "main principle (for the Commissioners to observe) is to aim at districts in which the electors have common interests." What does the L.C.L. mean by "common interests"? Is it a coincidence that approximately 174,000 electors living outside the metropolitan area can be divided into 26 districts, each having its community of interests, while approximately 287,000 electors living within the metropolitan area can only be divided into 13 such districts? I have never been thoroughly convinced as to the *bona fides* of the L.C.L. when it refers to common interests. As I have already suggested, the

very division of the State into metropolitan area and country is a sort of "common interest" division for Party purposes; and the juggling of boundaries within each of those areas, which this Bill is designed to authorize on the pretence that those boundaries will include electors with common interests, is just another expression of the Party interest that has determined these matters in the past. The gerrymander of 1936 consisted in the creation of single electorates determined from the point of view of which Party the L.C.L. thought the electors in each district would vote for; and that is the essential "common interest" which the L.C.L. has in mind now. The unjust and undemocratic ratio of two to one existed long before 1936, but multiple electorates, which did not lend themselves so readily to gerrymandering, enabled Labor to secure a majority at least in the House of Assembly occasionally.

If there is anything genuine at all in the L.C.L. idea of determining districts according to common interests, why should not the people living in metropolitan local government areas be regarded as having a good deal in common? There are 21 of these districts in the metropolitan area, probably each one of them having sufficient Assembly electors to warrant individual representation in this House. But perhaps too many of them would have such common interests that they would be induced to vote against L.C.L. candidates.

The Government's instruction to the 1936 committee, to ensure that districts were determined according to the L.C.L.'s idea of common interests, resulted in the creation of pocket boroughs, as it was intended that it should. Since 1938, when the first election after the gerrymander was held, the number of uncontested districts has increased with every election, with the exception of the 1953 election when local option polls and certain irresponsible candidates increased the number of contested districts. As many as 14 out of a total of 39 districts have been uncontested. That occurred in 1950. This unsatisfactory state of affairs is a direct consequence of the "common interest" basis, as interpreted by an L.C.L. Government; and the present proposals will have the same undesirable consequence.

The Premier's "main principle" might be more correctly expressed as an effort to induce more and more people to take less and less interest in Parliamentary elections, which, as I have said, is the inevitable consequence of determining districts according to the Party voted for. That is the worst thing that could

happen in any democracy. Along that road surely and inevitably lies the goal of totalitarianism. We on this side hate totalitarianism of any kind. That is why I am voicing these views today.

We have also been informed that the Government intends to appoint commissioners of "high standing and ability, who can be relied upon to faithfully carry out the provisions of the Bill." But all the Commissioners will have to know is what the Government wants done, and that is pretty obvious, so that the ability required will merely be exercised in ensuring that the new boundaries preserve the *status quo* as far as possible, although even that may necessitate a good deal of ingenuity on their part.

Mr. Dunks—Do you mean that the Commissioners will be told what to do?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—The Bill definitely tells them what they must do and very substantially how they must do it. After they have considered the matter it will be for the Government with its majority in Parliament to approve or disapprove their recommendations. Moreover, in view of the bare-faced injustice the Government proposes to perpetrate, I find it difficult to believe that any person of "high standing" will voluntarily associate himself with it.

The Bill merely proposes that a commission shall be set up to carry out the same instructions as the L.C.L. Government gave to a committee in 1936, and that committee was appointed by executive act of the Government. Actually, all the Government had to do on this occasion was to appoint a similar committee without the formality of passing an Act to set up a commission. The difference, in any case, is only one of name. But although the Bill is all about appointing a commission the real principle it expresses is that the L.C.L. policy of electoral misrepresentation shall be perpetuated. As such, it is entirely opposed to Labor principles and consequently I can only oppose it. No doubt, it will pass the second reading because the Government has sufficient numbers for the purpose; but in Committee I intend to move that the number of metropolitan members be increased to 18 and the number of country members to 27, and that the margin for metropolitan enrolments be 5 per cent instead of 20 per cent. If these amendments are rejected I will oppose the third reading of the Bill. If the Bill is passed, Labor will take every opportunity to expose the Government's gerrymandering intentions, which will be readily deducible, although

perhaps not perfectly obvious, in the changes which the commission will ultimately submit to Parliament.

I desire to make some amplification in anticipation of what Government members will say about my proposals when the time comes to express their views on them. They will say that I have abandoned Labor's policy of electoral justice but I have not and do not intend to do so. My Bill is still before the House and has reached the Committee stage. At the time members opposite were not constrained to vote against it. The important clause 5 was accepted and in it the principle of 45 members, which I suggest for this Bill, which is thoroughly bad in its conception. It is a negation of democratic principles. It is the product of the mind of people that desire to stay in power by any means. After I have done my best, and I am sure my colleagues will do their best also, to defeat the second reading we will endeavour to improve the measure in the Committee stage. It will be difficult to do so, but there could be accepted the suggestions to increase the size of Parliament, restore approximately the ratio between metropolitan and country electorates established in 1936, and to reduce the margin of tolerance in the metropolitan area from 20 per cent to 5 per cent. I believe that a tolerance of 5 per cent is ample. What circumstances could there be to necessitate a greater tolerance? The metropolitan area is substantially built on and everywhere in it the same forms of transport are enjoyed. Its people are engaged in the same type of business and industry, although some work very hard in order to produce and to transport and deliver goods whereas others work not so hard but reap handsome profits from the efforts of those who do work hard. Over all, there is a substantial community interest and there is no reason why there should be a 20 per cent tolerance either above or below the quota suggested in clause 5.

Mr. Jennings—They want to save the members for Glenalg and Unley.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—My friend seems to have pinpointed the reason for the tolerance. There were three electorates which were almost lost to the Liberal and Country League at the last State elections and the suggested alteration may enable boundaries to be drawn to save them at the next elections.

Mr. Dunks—Would it not be better for the Labor Party to vote for the second reading of this Bill in the same way as Government members voted for the second reading of the Opposition Bill?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—If I were satisfied that members opposite did not vote against it because they desired electoral justice I would cheerfully accept that suggestion, because my Bill is a just one. It seeks to give the people the right to elect the Government they want and to defeat the Government they do not want, whereas this Bill is not a just one because it seeks to deny that right to the people and to enact the legislation in perpetuity.

Mr. Dunstan—If they were sincere about our Bill this Bill would not be before the House.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Exactly. Our Bill would have been passed weeks ago and would be law today.

The Government spokesman in 1936, the Hon. S. W.—now Sir Shirley—Jeffries, in introducing the gerrymander that has since become notorious, endeavoured to justify the adoption of single electorates in preference to the multiple electorates which had been the fashion in South Australia for many years. In the light of experience during the intervening 18 years, his remarks on the the subject are well worth recalling. “The principal defect alleged against the single electorate,” he said, “was that it exaggerated the representation of majorities—in other words, the majority in Parliament of the successful party was greater than the number of votes cast for it warranted.” “It may be,” he went on, “that the criticism of the ‘exaggerated majority’ does not apply in the same degree to single electorates conducted on our present system of preferential voting and election by absolute majorities. However, assuming that the single electorate system does give exaggerated representation to the majority, that is not altogether a bad thing.” Of course it would not be altogether a bad thing if it only gave a somewhat exaggerated representation to majorities, but when it gives an exaggerated representation to minorities it becomes a very bad thing.

These references to the over-representation of the majority of electors would be amusing if they did not accentuate the tragic consequences of the kind of single electorates system that was forced upon us in 1936. Practically ever since that system was introduced, the party securing a majority in the House of Assembly has polled a minority of votes at elections, so that it is obvious there is something radically wrong with the system. So far from exaggerating the Parliamentary majority representing the majority of votes, the system has exaggerated the Parliamentary majority representing a minority of votes. Of course, when those from

whom the Attorney-General of the time derived his “arguments” were debating the merits and demerits of the single electorate system, they were thinking in terms of approximately equal enrolments. As political philosophers they may have been wise, but as political opportunists they were far behind the L.C.L. Speaking on another matter arising from the Bill he was introducing, the honourable member said:—

We all know of the countries in which weak Parliaments have resulted in the establishment of autocratic and tyrannous dictatorships.

No doubt he made that observation with a view to persuading members that the proposed electoral system—the one that we now have—would be the means of achieving strong Parliaments and of preventing the advent of “autocratic and tyrannous dictatorships.” But the very reverse has been the case. We have had a weak Parliament, and we have had a dictatorship within the Government, for the simple reason that the electors’ right to put the Government out of office has been taken away from them. Still another assertion made by the former Attorney-General was:—

I suggest to this House that the election of Parliaments in which one party or the other has a stable working majority of reasonable size is the essential basis of efficient Parliamentary government.

No-one will deny that if one party is returned to Parliament with a majority, its majority should be sufficient to enable it to carry on the government of the State with some degree of comfort while it is in power; and the electoral system should be such that, under ordinary circumstances, one party or another is able to secure that majority. But, as I have already said, and as I think all reasonable people will agree, if the electoral system ensures that one particular party—and only that party—shall be able to secure that majority at every election, even in spite of the occasional—and inevitable—swing against it, then the whole basis of Parliamentary government collapses. That is the position we have today and have had for many years. The L.C.L.’s idea of stable government is the continuance in office of an L.C.L. Government, whatever the majority of the people think; and that, of course, amounts to the stultification of the whole Parliamentary system.

By way of additional argument in favour of single electorates, the same speaker continued—but, remember, he was still quoting the political philosophers:—

Nor has the system failed to give each party a reasonable period of office. The well-known

political phenomenon of the swing of the pendulum occurs just as frequently under single electorates as under other systems.

Apparently the political philosophers he was quoting did not realize that under the single electorate system, as under any electoral system, there was such a thing as tying the pendulum back so as to prevent it from swinging from one side to the other and returning either Party to Government as is intended in all democracies and as should be the case wherever it is contended that the will of the people prevails. At the last elections the pendulum swung until it reached the barrier beyond which it could not pass and, although the Labor Party polled about 47,000 more votes than the Government, it returned only 14 members whereas the Government returned 21. The Government now seeks to ensure that the maximum barrier to which the pendulum might swing will be further curtailed.

Mr. Dunks—It is going to be left to the commission.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—With instructions such as are contained in this Bill. In 1936 the then Attorney-General continued:—"Looking at the system of single electorates as a whole, it appears to have resulted in a reasonable distribution of power as between the great political parties." Of course, with approximately equal electorates, each party would have to rely on the comparative support it could command, and one has only to study the changes that take place in the Federal sphere to see how that support may vary and be effectively expressed at election time under a truly democratic system. But, to mention one example of the effect of our South Australian electoral system, the great swing to Labor throughout Australia in 1943-44, which resulted in the return of Labor Governments in the Federal sphere and in all the other States and was not sufficient to return a Labor Government in this State, notwithstanding that the swing to Labor was more pronounced here than in any other part of Australia.

As for the "reasonable distribution of power as between the great political parties" mentioned by the speaker quoted, I would remind members that the Labor Party has never been in power in South Australia in the sense intended to be conveyed by that speaker. The L.C.L. gerrymander in this State extends beyond the mere rigging of boundaries of Assembly districts, which has since 1936 rendered Labor's majority vote ineffective. The restricted franchise applied to Legislative Council elections, not to mention optional

enrolment and optional voting for that House, has always been designed to prevent any other Party than the L.C.L. from actually controlling the Parliament of this State. Before 1936 it had always been difficult for Labor's majority vote to express itself effectively even in the House of Assembly, as indicated by the fact that you can count the Labor Governments on fingers of one hand. Since 1936, when the L.C.L.'s particular version of the single electorate system was imposed upon the people of this State, Labor has been unable to secure its "reasonable share" of power, even in the restricted sense of having a majority in this House, which, according to the "pendulum" law, it should have enjoyed. For that reason also the present system stands condemned.

The next quotation I take from the former Minister's speech will appear even more ludicrous than the preceding quotations. Again in support of the adoption of single electorates, he said:—

It is very doubtful whether, if we had retained multiple electorates, we could have arranged a reasonable reduction in the number of members without at the same time perpetuating the very gross anomalies in political representation which now exist.

Bad as those anomalies might have been, it is impossible to imagine that they could have been worse than the anomalies which an L.C.L. Government's "remedial" legislation, passed eighteen years ago, created in their stead. The old system of multiple electorates did at least enable the people to change the nature of the majority in the House of Assembly occasionally. As to the preservation of the city-country ratio of representation, the Government spokesman eighteen years ago was apparently naive enough to hope that members would accept the following as a justification for it. He said:—

The proposals in the Bill do not alter materially the present position. The Government's policy always has been to preserve this ratio and we have at no time bound ourselves to alter it. We are totally opposed to a system which would give more than half the representation to the metropolitan area . . . Furthermore, considering the present ratio between city and country quotas, no party appears to have derived in recent years any advantage or disadvantage from the preponderance of country representatives. Both parties have had their fair share of office."

I have already discussed this sentiment, but I would like to repeat that the adoption of the L.C.L. single electorate system was the means whereby that party sought to ensure that Labor would not again secure even a majority in the House of Assembly. The very fact that Labor was able to secure a majority in this House

under the old multiple electorate system proves conclusively that gerrymandering was resorted to in determining the single electorates—that is, in applying the L.C.L. principle of “common interest.”

Before concluding, I wish to say a few words on the Government's conduct since it realized that there was some slight similarity between my Bill to amend the Constitution Act and its own Bill to set up a commission to re-arrange existing boundaries. Actually, the degree of similarity between these two Bills is so slight that I am at a loss to know why the Government should have allowed itself to be stampeded into doing what it has done; but the fact remains that it has earned itself little credit as a result of its insincere attitude to my Bill. The provisions in my Bill relating to the appointment, constitution and functions of a commission were intended to become a permanent part of the Constitution Act, so that, as occasion arose in the future, re-distributions would be carried out more or less automatically. The Bill we are now discussing provides for the appointment of a commission to carry out the so-called “electoral policy” of the L.C.L.—that is, merely to re-draw the boundaries in accordance with that policy. After that is accomplished, the Premier will still have to introduce a Bill to amend the Constitution Act by substituting the new district descriptions for those at present in that Act. The Bill to set up this commission does not, of course, amend the Constitution Act itself.

For some reason the Premier appears to think that a vote cannot be taken on my Bill or at least that it cannot be defeated because that would prejudice the fate of his own Bill in terms of Standing Order No. 198. And perhaps that accounts for the peculiar attitude he has instructed his supporters to adopt towards my Bill. But what sort of political honesty is there among L.C.L. members if the Premier can vigorously oppose my Bill in his second reading speech, and yet conspire with them to refrain from voting on the second reading?

Mr. Hutchens—What honesty is there in the Premier?

Mr. O'HALLORAN—Precisely. The Government has even been prepared to allow the Bill to go into Committee, where the provision increasing the number of members of the House of Assembly from 39 to 45 was agreed to. The scene which we witnessed during the Committee debate indicated clearly that the Premier was prepared to stoop to any subterfuge in order to stall off the issue. But what might have

appeared to him to be a clever ruse has only brought out in stronger relief the insincerity that prompted it. This Bill, based as it is, on the retention of the L.C.L. principle of electoral injustice, is so bereft of the democratic spirit expressed in the constitution of practically every other self-governing British community that I cannot possibly support it.

Mr. JENNINGS (Prospect)—As apparently no Government supporters are prepared to support this Bill and as they are as ashamed as they ought to be of it I hope that it will not pass.

Mr. Dunks—It is so good that there is no need to paint the lily.

Mr. JENNINGS—I do not want any member to have any doubts on what I think of the Bill; indeed, I shall speak in such a way that there will be no room for doubt. The Bill is putrid. It is a disgrace to any British Parliament. It is the worst form of subtle and insidious dictatorship. It is a prostitution of Parliament, for it uses Parliament to defeat all that is good in Parliament. If we do not get sufficient support, though I think we shall, to defeat the Bill on the second reading, or to carry the Opposition's amendments to transform it from a sordid, totalitarian instrument into one of genuine electoral reform, it will be too late to do anything, for we shall have in perpetuity the vicious circle of an ill-gotten Parliamentary majority protecting and insulating itself against the majority of the people. If this continues this Parliament must become despised by the people and the institution itself condemned as an insurmountable barrier to freedom instead of being, as it should be, revered as the bulwark of freedom. It would be ironical if in these days, when there is probably more occasion than ever to defend the institution of Parliament from those who would be glad to see it destroyed, we saw the influence of Parliament wither and decline through the action of Parliament itself for no other reason than to satisfy the lust for power of an already power-drunk Party or to gratify the vainglorious ambitions of the shameless dictator of this State. The Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, only a week or two ago admitted that in South Australia we live under a dictatorship and that the Premier is a dictator. After all, who could be a better judge than Mr. Menzies, who came back from Europe praising Hitler and the totalitarian regime in Japan?

Mr. Macgillivray—I was suspended some years ago for saying less than you have.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes. The honourable member was suspended for suggesting that the Premier was a dictator, but now the Premier sits back and says to himself, "Yes, I am," and beats his chest like a gorilla.

The SPEAKER—I do not think members ought to reflect on one another.

Mr. JENNINGS—I was referring to the action of beating, not reflecting. The love of office and ambitions of an individual member are as nothing compared to the need to raise the prestige of Parliament and to foster an affection for the ideal of Parliamentary Government or, indeed, to a right which should be the unalienable right of the people to elect or reject any particular administration. The Bill proposes to appoint a commission of three members to effect a redivision of electoral boundaries. The Premier said that they will be men of the highest probity. I have no doubt they will be, for it will look better if they are, but it would not make the slightest difference if they were three habitual criminals or three unfortunate inmates of some lunatic asylum, because they will have no discretionary power to draw up a fair redistribution of electorates. They are obliged to maintain the present ratio between metropolitan and country seats. Furthermore, they are instructed by the Bill to alter the existing boundaries as little as possible, so obviously there will be no real change as a result of this measure. Its introduction would never have been contemplated if the change in population over the last few years had not endangered certain Government-held seats, notably Glenelg, Torrens and Unley, particularly Glenelg.

The object of the Bill is clearly to regerrymander to perpetuity. Indeed, it will worsen the present vile obstruction to democracy under which we now work. It will make infinitely worse the disparity that existed between the numerical strength of country and metropolitan electorates when the present gerrymander was imposed. It was bad enough then; indeed, one could have been pardoned for imagining that it could not be worse, but this Bill shows that no matter how rotten anything is there is even a greater depth of rottenness to which this Government will descend in order to retain power. No-one with the slightest regard for democratic principles or respect for political honesty could have viewed the 1936 gerrymander without fear and loathing, but compared to this Bill it was a fair and lily-white document. It was just and honourable compared with this foul and vicious Bill. Even if we accept the perverted principle enunciated

in 1936, this Bill still stands condemned because under it the average metropolitan electorate will have increased 40 per cent in population since then, whereas the average country electorate will have increased less than 20 per cent. Furthermore, then the average metropolitan electorate was 15,665, but the average country electorate was only 5,718. The Bill cannot be supported even on the brutal, unjust basis that was laid down in 1936 when the gerrymander was perpetrated. Even if Government members are wilfully blind and do not believe in decency—

The SPEAKER—I do not think we should say that because the Standing Orders say that we must not reflect on members, though the honourable member may attack the Bill.

Mr. JENNINGS—May I say "If members are so wilfully blind to political honesty"?

The SPEAKER—No, because they could say that about you, and where would we be then?

Mr. JENNINGS—If it is asserted that the 1936 redistribution was justifiable members must, to be consistent, agree that this Bill is unjustifiable. If that principle, without a principle, laid down in 1936 is to be maintained this Bill must be amended to alter the ratio between metropolitan and country seats in accordance with the transfer of population from the country to the city.

Mr. Dunks—If the honourable member votes for the second reading he can try to amend the Bill in Committee.

Mr. JENNINGS—I will not vote for the second reading, and I reserve my right to move to amend it if it is carried, though I do not think it will be if the member for Mitcham has his way. It is obvious from the Bill that the Premier is content to give his imprimatur to a gerrymander more disgraceful than that effected by his erstwhile friend, Sir Richard Butler. People who could be described as politically honest supporters of the Liberal Party have said in defence of the Premier that this abomination of electoral laws was not his doing; but was the brain-child of his predecessor. They have said, "Honest Tom would never be guilty of such a thing as this." That was not very logical because, even though another leader was responsible for the present system, the present Premier has been glad to shelter behind it for the whole of his term of office and has resolutely refused to amend it. Now, however, the argument that the present Premier would not countenance anything so vile as this is completely exploded. It is now perfectly clear that he is prepared to go much further and use an even thicker totalitarian

bludgeon than his ill-famed predecessor. That must prove conclusively to many people that their hero has feet of clay. We have heard it said that the Liberal Party boasted that the 1936 gerrymander would keep it in power for 20 years. It has almost done that, and apparently this legislation is designed to take care of the next 20 years for the Liberal Party and to ensure that the Premier will double his record for long service as a State Premier. No-one would deny him all honour for that record if he had obtained it honestly, but as it has been established as a result of electoral corruption he should hang his head in shame every November 5, the anniversary of his assumption of office.

Mr. Dunstan—As far as this Parliament is concerned he is just another Guy Fawkes.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes; what a sinister significance there is in the coincidence that the anniversary of the attempt to destroy Parliament and Parliamentary Government by blowing up Parliament House with everything in it should also be the anniversary of the assumption of office of a man who is doing that more effectively, more surreptitiously, and in a much more cowardly manner by—

The SPEAKER—No. I ask the honourable member not to abuse the Premier by accusing him of a cowardly act. I ask him to withdraw that remark.

Mr. JENNINGS—I said it was a cowardly manner of destroying the Parliamentary system.

The SPEAKER—The Premier does not use that procedure. I ask the honourable member to attack the Bill and not other members. I ask the honourable member to withdraw his remark.

Mr. JENNINGS—At your request, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw it. I was pointing out that Parliament is being effectively destroyed by this surreptitious means of rigging the electoral system. The remark about Guy Fawkes reminds me of the Legislative Council in this State. As that august chamber is mentioned in this Bill I imagine that I am in order in speaking about it. Members too rarely have the opportunity to speak about the Council. If there is anything in the world that would inspire sympathy with the motives of Guy Fawkes it is the Legislative Council of South Australia. I submit that that House is a farce.

The SPEAKER—We are not seeking to abolish it and Standing Orders lay down that honourable members may not reflect on it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I am referring to the method of its election, which results in its

present farcical character. It is like something from Gilbert and Sullivan except that, although its conduct is comical, its effects are often tragic.

Mr. John Clark—And there is no music.

Mr. JENNINGS—None except the snores. Recently, as an act of penance I went into the Council Chamber and found the Council in session. A most important matter was being discussed and a division was called for.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may not discuss the proceedings in the Council this session, because Standing Orders do not permit it.

Mr. JENNINGS—I also went in to the Council last session and met the same circumstances. A most important matter was being discussed and a division was called for by the Leader of the Labor Party there. That division resulted in the defeat of the Labor Party's amendment by 15 votes to 4, and that is typical of how divisions are defeated on party lines in that place. One fifth of the members voted for Labor's amendment and three quarters against it. If anybody either inside or outside this House suggests that such voting even remotely reflects the Labor vote in the community generally, then he has reached the apex of absurdity. It is perfectly obvious that the Council as at present constituted does not in any way reflect the desires of South Australians generally.

Mr. Dunstan—It represents only the Koo-yonga golf course.

Mr. JENNINGS—Yes. The method of electing members to the Upper House is ridiculous, and if the Premier were genuine in his desire to modernize or rationalize our electoral set-up he could not fail to take drastic remedial action in this matter instead of leaving it as he leaves it under this Bill—gerrymandered, antiquated, non-representative and, with the exception of four members, occupied by the political derelicts of this State.

The SPEAKER—That is out of order. I point out to the honourable member that he has a wide and rich opportunity to discuss constitutional procedure, but he must not reflect on another House. We do not reflect on one another. I ask the honourable member to withdraw his reflection on the Legislative Council, otherwise they may reflect on us and we may destroy our own institution.

Mr. JENNINGS—At your request, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw, but I point out that if anything in the world is calculated to destroy the prestige of Parliament it is the vicious Bill now before us. Whether viewed from the

point of view of the House of Assembly or the Legislative Council this Bill is vile. It is obviously designed to afford country voters a vote three times the value of a city vote; it clearly ensures government by the minority; it is calculated to preserve in perpetuity the Playford dictatorship of South Australia. There must be some members opposite who value decency, honesty and true Liberal principles above party advantage, and I appeal to them to vote against this Bill and insist on a proper electoral reform measure. I believe that some Government members will show their better selves by voting against the Bill, seeing that many are apparently not anxious to speak in support of it. I would not like to think that some members opposite for whom I have a high personal regard are the same sort of political poltroons as those who will support this Bill. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether you have gathered from my remarks that I oppose this Bill, but in case you have not, I state now that I oppose it and that I trust it will be defeated because I hesitate to believe that a measure such as this will ever pass in this Parliament. The only way it can be defeated is for some Liberal members to vote with the Opposition, and I think some of them will; but if not, there is no other conclusion to be drawn than that all of them are craven—

The SPEAKER—Order! Words of that sort do not accord with the general tone of debate in this House, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark. He is going very well on the Bill without talking personalities.

Mr. JENNINGS—In that case, Mr. Speaker, I say that, if some members opposite are not prepared to vote with the Opposition on this Bill, it will be quite clear that all of them are, as their leader has shown over the years, afraid of a fair election.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Norwood)—I rise with hesitance to speak on this Bill because I must confess that, when a measure such as this comes before the House and receives the facetious comments that some members of the Government have seen fit to make on it, when such a measure is put seriously before Parliament by which the people are to be delivered over to dictatorship *in perpetuo*, it is time that the gloves were off. It is no longer time to treat this as a tea party debating matter, for it is one that will affect the future lives of all South Australians. The Bill is designed not only to perpetuate, but to worsen, the gerrymander, which means that the majority of

South Australians cannot have the Government they desire and are thereby deprived of any chance of democracy. Consequently, South Australians will have no hope in the future of obtaining the things they most desire from their Government. This Bill proposes to set up a commission to revise electoral boundaries, and it is obvious why that is to be done: the commission is to be bound hand and foot. It is not to be an independent commission: it is to be told what to do. In the metropolitan area it is to make the electorates “approximately equal”; but “approximately equal” should not be taken to mean what most people think it means because the Bill provides that there may be a difference of 8,000 or 9,000 in the strengths of metropolitan electorates. The situation is farcical, and in addition the Electoral Commission is to provide, under clause 7 (2) (b), that as far as possible the boundaries of existing electorates are to be maintained. Why? All this clause seeks to do is to provide that within the metropolitan area a certain number of swinging seats shall be saved. If there were to be any just redistribution one metropolitan seat would have to be taken from the eastern and central suburbs and given to the western. Clearly the Government has looked at that and could not do it, because if it did the member for Torrens’ seat would disappear; it would be the only one that could, because North Adelaide and Lower North Adelaide would have to go to the Adelaide electorate and the remainder would have to be carved up, and the member for Torrens (Mr. Travers) would disappear from this House. Of course, the Government does not want that to happen, so it is provided that there is to be this enormous disparity within a closely settled area—a disparity of 20 per cent in the less closely settled districts. Is fair enough because of geographical difficulties—and this is entirely devoid of principle and merely designed to retain the present members in Parliament. This is not an electoral reform Bill, but a Bill to maintain the present Government in power despite the wishes of the people, and to protect the present rotten boroughs of this Parliament.

I point out that that system means that this Government does not come to the people in order to give the people what they desire. The Government has introduced this Bill for two purposes: firstly, to enable it to say that it has done something about electoral reform; so that it will be able to quote some provisions of the Bill without mentioning others—“We tried to make the electorates approximately

equal, so it is democratic." I say that that provision is only there in order that the Government may shelter behind this commission—a commission which it seeks to bind hand and foot. It ties the people of South Australia to a system that is totally opposed to the very basis and ideas of democracy.

Mr. Brookman—Do you believe in State Parliaments?

Mr. DUNSTAN—No, but as long as they have to be accepted they should exist on a basis of democracy and not a basis of dictatorship. The measure aims at perpetuating the present system and to protect the members for Unley, Torrens and Glenelg, because it was clearly seen at the last State elections that they were in grave danger, and that if the figures for the Federal elections were repeated in the next State elections they would be out of this House. What can be said of a system of that kind? I am appalled that members elected to this House, having taken the oath of office that they must take when they come here, can put this forward. To me the measure is not merely indecent, it is contemptibly immoral and I cannot dissociate the measure itself from the persons who put it forward and who support it. If the measure is immoral so are the motives of those who put it forward.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Dunks)—May I assume that the honourable member means by that remark that the people who have put this Bill forward are immoral?

Mr. DUNSTAN—Yes, Sir. That is my contention. I cannot separate this measure from the motives of the people who put it forward.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—On a point of order, Sir, I suggest that the honourable member's remark is a grave reflection on the Leader of this House, the Premier, and I suggest that he withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER—I asked the honourable member that question because, when he said that the Bill itself was immoral I did not take much notice of it, but now that he says that the people who brought it forward are immoral we must link it with the Premier. It is an implication that the Premier is immoral as well as those supporting him, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I regret that I cannot withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Has the honourable member any explanation to make?

Mr. DUNSTAN—No, Sir, I have made my explanation.

The ACTING SPEAKER—And the honourable member will not withdraw?

Mr. DUNSTAN—No.

The ACTING SPEAKER—And he still maintains that people who brought this Bill forward are immoral?

Mr. DUNSTAN—I do.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Then I name the honourable member.

Mr. DUNSTAN—I wish to make no further explanation than I have already made to the House.

Mr. Dunstan then left the Chamber.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Robert Nicholls) resumed the Chair.

The SPEAKER—Mr. Premier, I was out of the Chamber when the Acting Speaker named the member for Norwood. It has been reported to me that the honourable member made all the explanation he desired in respect of his utterance and he has retired from the Chamber. It is now for the House to say whether he be suspended and for what time.

The Hon. T. PLAYFORD—I move—

That the honourable member for Norwood be suspended for the remainder of the present sitting.

The Hon. A. W. CHRISTIAN—I second the motion.

Mr. O'HALLORAN (Leader of the Opposition)—I wish to move an amendment. I was on a deputation to the Premier when this incident occurred.

Mr. STOTT—On a point of order, Sir. Under Standing Order No. 167 no amendment can be moved to a motion for suspension.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the Opposition has not handed me any amendment, and it has to be in writing.

Mr. O'HALLORAN—I am opposing the motion because I think that at least I am entitled to know more of the circumstances of the case than I do now.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the Opposition has stated he opposes the motion. Under Standing Orders he cannot debate the question.

Mr. RICHES—Is it not competent for a member to move that the explanation of the honourable member for Norwood be accepted?

The SPEAKER—It was at the time. I was out of the Chamber then.

Mr. DUNKS—May I explain to you, Sir, that I gave the honourable member every opportunity to explain his utterance, but he said he did not want to explain it further.

Mr. STEPHENS—May I ask you a question, Sir? Since I have been a member of this House—

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may only ask a question.

Mr. STEPHENS—On one occasion the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. R. S. Richards, after a hot debate—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member may only ask a question.

Mr. STEPHENS—A motion was moved by Mr. Richards that the explanation be accepted—

The SPEAKER—But that time has passed.

Mr. STOTT—On a point of order, Sir. Under Standing Order No. 89 an honourable member who has been named must be called before the House to make an explanation which has not been done.

The SPEAKER—The honorable member made his explanation and retired.

Mr. STOTT—He can be called before the House, under Standing Order No. 89.

The SPEAKER—No, he cannot now.

The House divided on the motion.—

Ayes (21).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunks, Dunnage, Fletcher, Goldney, Hawker and Heaslip, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, Macgillivray, Michael, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford, Quirke, Shannon, Stott, Teusner, and White.

Noes (11).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, O'Halloran, Riches, Stephens, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Majority of 10 for the Ayes.

Motion for suspension thus carried.

Mr. SHANNON (Onkaparinga)—I do not know that I would have spoken at this stage but for the unfortunate incident that has just occurred.

The SPEAKER—I do not propose to allow the honourable member to discuss that incident any farther. It is closed.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not intend to discuss it except to say that I hope certain members who have the ears and eyes of the people will be seized with the full import of what has just taken place.

Mr. STEPHENS—On a point of order, is the honourable member right in discussing the matter?

Mr. SPEAKER—Order!

Mr. SHANNON—I trust that too much importance is not placed on certain things that happen in this Chamber from time to time. The one that has just occurred is not the only one that has happened this afternoon. We have had some immoderate statements on this matter.

Mr. Jennings—Immodest.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not care what the honourable member calls them.

Mr. Jennings—You do not care about anything except what you introduce yourself.

The SPEAKER—Members must refer to the matter before the Chair.

Mr. SHANNON—I think I am entitled to reply to some of the immoderate statements made by Opposition members.

The SPEAKER—Not remarks that I have called to order.

Mr. SHANNON—These were not called to order. They were made by Mr. Jennings. I was not in the Chamber to hear them but I clearly heard them whilst in the lobby. In fact, I thought the honourable member was speaking in the Botanic Park so insistent was he on being heard. There is no doubt that he spoke to certain people. I do not know that it is wise in debating this matter to emulate soap box orators. We can hear quite clearly in this Chamber. I heard certain comments which disclosed to me that the approach to the Bill was not as it should have been. We should have a calm discussion on the merits and demerits of the Bill. Mr. Dunstan, unhappily no longer with us, made certain remarks regarding what he thought was the disparity permissible in the Government's proposal by the provision of a 20 per cent tolerance. I think he intentionally avoided noting that the Bill introduced by his leader had a similar tolerance. That Bill is still before us.

Mr. Jennings—You compare them. They are entirely different.

Mr. SHANNON—If the honourable member will be patient for a while I hope to convince even him, although that may be difficult, that the tolerance which Mr. Dunstan strongly opposed in this Bill is part and parcel of the Bill introduced by his leader. There is the same 20 per cent tolerance. Members opposite can sigh but I realize that if I were an Opposition member I would sigh too, knowing that what I am saying is correct. I think Mr. John Clark understands what is contained in the two Bills.

Mr. John Clark—Why pick on me?

Mr. SHANNON—I thought I heard the honourable member suggest that the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition did not provide for a 20 per cent tolerance.

Mr. John Clark—The Leader of the Opposition tried to explain the position this afternoon.

Mr. SHANNON—I did not say that he did not explain it. Apparently the honourable member has a different approach to legislation

introduced by the Opposition and that coming from this side, and I am sorry for that because in this instance tolerance is a stated principle. There can be no different approach, because the same tolerance is set out in the two Bills. If the Leader of the Opposition argued that away in my absence I am sorry that I was not here, because it must have been a skilful effort in the art of debating, but I do not think it could have been done. If it is good for our friends opposite to have a tolerance as between adjoining electorates surely it is a good thing for members on this side to have it. For that reason I suggest that Opposition members look into their own cupboard first and see if they have any hidden skeletons before charging members on this side with having hidden skeletons. I am convinced that the Bill now before us has some merit because of its impartial approach to the problem. It sets up a committee of people about whom there can be no doubts as to honesty. There will be an honest attempt to meet the change in the population that has taken place since last electoral boundaries were altered. I am certain that that will be the average person's approach to the commission's recommendations.

Another important matter is the disparity of votes as between city and country. I am not ashamed, despite the hard words used by Opposition members, to accept any odium attached to supporting a system of giving greater voting power to country people than to metropolitan residents. In this matter I err in very good company and it is a company which members opposite have on a number of occasions lauded for its action. I refer to people who reside in the eastern States. On this matter they deny, when charged with the sin, that they will have a bar of it, but the Queensland Government has adopted the very same thing. Opposition members do not mind if the Queensland law does not meet the very high standard of one vote one value.

Mr. Fred Walsh—What is wrong with New South Wales? That is the only State where you might get a Government.

Mr. SHANNON—I am not too sure about that. The honourable member knows perhaps more than I do about what is going on behind closed doors, but I believe there are a few unsettled districts in New South Wales.

Mr. Fred Walsh—You won't be put out because of anything you might say because you are on the right side of the House. Others can be as extravagant as they like and make all sorts of innuendos.

The ACTING SPEAKER—I ask members to maintain order.

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member and I are in complete agreement on this matter.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Tell us what is going on behind closed doors and then we will know.

Mr. SHANNON—On this matter we are in entire agreement.

Mr. Fred Walsh—What do you mean?

Mr. SHANNON—I can say in this Chamber things which I think should be said in the interests of the people I represent, and even people outside my electorate, because our duties and responsibilities go beyond our electoral boundaries. I am a free agent to say what I think should be said, irrespective of whether it is in accord with the views of my leader, the Premier. Members know that on occasions I have divided the House on a matter about which I have been sufficiently earnest, and against the wishes of my leader. I believe I have done it this session. We should be permitted to say what we think and not what someone else says we ought to say. I think this is of some importance to the democratic way of life. Not once but many times in this Chamber I have disagreed with the Premier because I have had a different opinion. I may have been wrong, because I do not regard myself as an oracle. One honourable member who sits across the aisle from me who was once a member of the Labor Party is now an Independent because he had the courage of his convictions and his Party had to get rid of him. That was because he was an individualist.

Mr. John Clark—Does that affect this Bill?

Mr. SHANNON—I think it does. This Bill sets out to establish a system under which the members of this Chamber have the right to represent the electorates in the way they see fit irrespective of any influence that might be brought forward. I do not think that those who support the disparity of voting power between the country and city need offer any excuses. If any were necessary they should be made, not by members of my Party, but by members opposite. It is quite obvious that if a country like South Australia, which is just in its swaddling clothes as far as development is concerned, is to be fully developed we do not want to apply the whole of our energies to the parts in and around the metropolitan area, where we have a fairly complete developmental set-up.

Mr. John Clark—Do you believe this?

Mr. SHANNON—The honourable member is like another person whose name, I believe, was Thomas.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order!

Mr. John Clark—I only asked a simple question.

Mr. SHANNON—You asked whether I believed this and I said you were a doubting Thomas. I believe if this State it to continue to progress—and I am one who thinks it will—country areas and country interests must have a paramount voice in the administration of the State.

Mr. John Clark—At the rate things are going there will soon be nobody left in the country to have a vote.

Mr. SHANNON—I do not know that that is true because of the development in the forests in the South-East, on Eyre Peninsula and in the River Murray Valley. I am not too sure that in a few years those outside the metropolitan area will not be able to tell the State where it gets off. During the brief time that I have been in this Chamber I have seen what has happened and I make no bones about suggesting that the head of Spencer's Gulf at some time in the not too distant future—it may be 10, 50 or even 100 years, but in the foreseeable future—will be more important industrially than the whole of Adelaide.

Mr. John Clark—That is only wishful thinking.

Mr. SHANNON—It is not; it is obvious observation on what this Government has done to make that development possible.

Mr. John Clark—You do not even believe it yourself.

Mr. SHANNON—That is so futile that I will not answer it.

Mr. John Clark—The only way to answer futility is with futility.

Mr. SHANNON—I could not keep up with the honourable member on that basis. I believe that the suggested re-arrangement of electoral boundaries on the basis of 26 seats for country areas and 13 for the metropolitan area will perpetuate an industrial growth in our country areas that we are sadly lacking today. If we ever permit the vested interests, those who can listen to the town hall chimes, to dictate the policy that should be pursued I have some grave doubts about the development taking place at the head of Spencer's Gulf. In another sphere of politics we have seen this insistent demand by people with axes to grind going to members on both sides of the Chamber and saying, "It is as much as your life is worth if you do not say that this industry shall be directed to one particular spot." That is one of the evils from which this young

country has suffered most; the evil of having undue influences exerted to make our capitals ever more overpowering in proportion to the population than they are already. I know it is very difficult to tell a new industry that it will not be allowed to go to Port Adelaide but must set up at Murray Bridge, Port Pirie or Port Augusta. Unfortunately, industries have to make a profit to enable them to pay a dividend to their shareholders. They could not operate under unfavourable conditions and the only way the Government can approach the problem of decentralization is for it to make it attractive for industries to go to the more distant country centres.

One of the achievements of the Premier that cannot be taken away from him is that he has done more in his term of office to encourage industries to go to country areas than any Premier since the inception of Parliamentary Government in this State. I know of no other era that can compare even very distantly with this, because of the achievements of the Premier, with the assistance of his colleagues, since he took over the reins of office. For these indisputable reasons, to alter the ratio between country and city would be fatal to the welfare of the State, and this includes, strangely enough, those who reside in the metropolitan area because in the final analysis those living in the city depend for their livelihood on the success or failure of the State as a whole. Big cities cannot support themselves; they depend on the hinterland. In this State we have a glaring example of the dependency of the city people on the country for their means of sustenance. We have a greater need to rest upon the labours of those who are applying their energies to the soil than in most States. Only two other States approach us in this particular regard, Western Australia and possibly Queensland. Queensland has a long coastline, good harbours and very good geographical features and these factors have operated against centralization. This State has some geographical features that I believe will ultimately assist us in decentralizing industry around our coastline and I believe the present Government appreciates that possibility.

If we want to make Adelaide the Mecca for South Australia, we should give the city dweller a preponderance of votes in this Chamber, but I believe that would be bad for Adelaide. I may be wrong about that and if so my opponents will say so, but I believe that the prosperity of the city depends on the prosperity of the State, although some of our secondary industries are on their feet and

doing a good job. I cannot foresee that it will be otherwise in future because much of Australia's production must of necessity be food-stuffs and clothing material, so these will always be a major source of income. Our primary industries are the foundation upon which our very high standard of living is built, and consist of the production of wheat and wool, the export of meat, dairy produce and dried fruit. It would be physically impossible for any country, even with inflation, Social Credit or anything else, to maintain that standard of living without the backing of what we get from our country areas. It just cannot be done if we have to compete in the markets of the world with our manufactured goods. Our closest competitor is the Near East—the cheapest market in the world where the rates paid for labour are the lowest in the world. The people in these countries are our competitors in manufactured goods and are the closest customers of our manufactured goods. On the other hand, Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America are thousands of miles away—there being little less than half the distance between them and most of our other competitors. We would not be in the race. I do not ever envisage Australia being a major secondary producer, unless it should be in the unhappy days of a war. Then we might be turned into an arsenal, whether we like it or not.

Members should approach this problem from the point of view of the best interests of the people of the State and should not be overawed by catch-cries. After all the major catch-cry by the Opposition in the field of electoral reform is "One vote one value." Do I have to remind members opposite that they have propounded a Bill, which is still before us, that voids this very principle? The Labor Party itself has decided in its wisdom to make special provision for Eyre Peninsula, the lower end of which is as rich and fertile for its size as any part of the State, and I include the South-East. The Labor Party in its wisdom seeks to give the whole of Eyre Peninsula special treatment.

Mr. HUTCHENS—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I take it that the honourable member should not refer to another Bill which is before the House.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is not in order in debating another measure which is before the House.

Mr. SHANNON—I thought possibly a little comparison would not be odious; if it is odious I will not pursue it any further. I support

the approach to this problem which the Government has seen fit to adopt. It is eminently fair and right that we should have appointed a body of people qualified to investigate this problem for us. I believe that the Government's instruction laid down in the Bill to the committee for its guidance in the redistribution of electorates is in the interests of the State. We would be unwise, especially at this stage of our development, to depart from it. A similar principle has been pursued for centuries by the Mother of Parliaments, and not just for a passing few years. This Parliament is not yet 100 years old. The Mother of Parliaments has seen fit to have a disparity in the numerical strength of electorates over a period of centuries. As far as I know they still have not an equality of numerical strength and do not propose to adopt the principle of "one vote one value." Under all these circumstances I cannot find any authorities sufficiently strong in their arguments to sway my judgment that we are not doing the wrong thing in the interests of the people in continuing what, at the moment, is proving a very valuable democratic set-up for the advancement of the State.

Mr. JOHN CLARK moved the adjournment of the debate.

The House divided on the motion:—

Ayes (12).—Messrs. John Clark (teller), Coreoran, Davis, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray, O'Halloran, Riches, Stephens, Frank Walsh and Fred Walsh.

Noes (21).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunks, Dunnage, Fletcher, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Sir George Jenkins, Messrs. Jenkins, Michael, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Quirke, Shannon, Stott, Teusner, Travers and White.

Majority of 9 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. JOHN CLARK (Gawler)—During this session I seem fated to follow the honourable member for Onkaparinga. If he could speak as he did on this debate, very obviously unprepared, I suppose I shall have to take my fate in my hands and speak with only a very little preparation. I should like to congratulate the honourable member, but cannot compliment him, if compliment it could be, on his speech. I am not reflecting on the honourable member, but point out that he made very few remarks which were apropos to the Bill. He travelled from Dan to Beersheba and referred to many things. He certainly spoke eloquently, but he seems to have the inimitable knack of being able to make a destructive speech without having much to say on the

matter under discussion. However, on this Bill, which I consider vital to the future of the people of this State, I shall talk on nothing else but what is contained in it. Earlier in this session, speaking on a very worthy Bill, one containing the essence of democratic principles as regards voting rights, and introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, I made the following comment:—

The main purpose of this Bill is to get rid of the objectionable and evil gerrymander, which is ruining the State.

That was the purpose of that Bill and still is, but the object of the present Bill is the reverse. It has been said this afternoon in very strong terms, with which I entirely agree, that its object is to perpetuate and intensify the same objectionable, evil gerrymander, but this time it is doing it, believe it or not, under the guise of giving to country areas something they do not want—unjust and unequal electoral representation. The member for Onkaparinga, Mr. Shannon, referred to the growth of industry in our country areas and to the increased prosperity of the country. I have frequently heard that figures mean little, but the figures of population must mean something. The population in the country has steadily declined under the present system of electoral boundaries.

Mr. Teusner—It might have been worse under the system you advocate.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—It might, but under the present system, which renders it impossible to try any other system, it is difficult to prove whether it would have been better or worse. Personally I think it could not possibly have been worse. The Government has made it impossible for any other Party to govern, whether the people want it or not. It has been suggested, as an excuse for this Bill, that the electoral boundaries are to be adjusted in the interests of the country people. We should make our minds up at the outset about the validity of that excuse. I believe it is a deliberate and despicable lie and cannot be regarded otherwise. No-one would be foolish enough to swallow it. I never thought when I first entered this Chamber—and I did so with pride—that the time would come when I would listen to debate on legislation of which this House should be utterly ashamed. Despite the reasons given for this legislation, it can only bring our honourable calling as legislators into disrepute. To think that honourable members of this Chamber, to save their own thick hides, would be prepared to sit and—I was going to say silently—vote—

The SPEAKER—Is the honourable member reflecting on honourable members?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I have no intention of doing so. I was implying that if members were prepared to sit idly without speaking on a Bill such as this it would tend to bring our calling into disrepute. To put it bluntly, this new scheme is an attempt to bolster up one or two seats represented by worthy members—estimable gentlemen apart from their political convictions—which would otherwise be lost to the Government. The Government realises that unless something drastic is done rapidly the people in those districts will get the representation they desire—a Labor member. I believe this is the main reason for the introduction of the Bill. I do not believe for one moment that it has anything to do with this sad sob story of helping the country nor do I think that honourable members who get up and suggest that it has believe it either.

I have often heard the saying that absolute power corrupts absolutely. This Bill provides full proof of the truth of that saying. Some members—especially the member for Chaffey—will recall that not so long ago a member of this House was escorted from the Chamber because he had the appalling temerity to speak of the Premier as a dictator. I believe that a shocked silence descended on the Chamber when that terrible word was used. Let us consider what happens nowadays. I hasten to say that I am not reflecting for one moment on the Chamber or your conduct, Mr. Speaker, but what a change has come over the House. The term, which was used by the member for Chaffey then, has become popular and hardly a day passes that the Premier is not so addressed. I do not suggest that the dignity of the Chamber has been lowered or that your control has lessened, Mr. Speaker, but when that term is applied to the Premier nowadays it seems to run off his back like water off a duck's back. At times he appears to enjoy it and enters into the spirit of it. He smiles with obvious pleasure, regarding it as a compliment. I suggest that when any leader of what has become almost a totalitarian Government begins to enjoy being a demagogue it is a sign that we are close to the borders of unspeakable danger.

In this State we can derive some satisfaction from observing the lessons of history. Most persons who have studied history will realize that all dictators, from Nero to Hitler, have eventually paid the penalty for their wrongdoings; but we must remember, too, that the nations over which they lorded it so absolutely

suffered and, although the result to demagogues and dictators is their ultimate downfall, much happens while people wait for it. It behoves us not to sit idly by and watch such things happening. We know in our hearts that in this State the ignominious overthrow and defeat of the one-man Government must eventually come. I remind members that moral damage can be caused. I use the word "moral", in its restricted sense because apparently it is a dangerous word this afternoon in certain connotations. Everyone knows that this Parliament is not elected justly. That particularly evil light is no longer hidden under a bushel. This Parliament cannot, under the present law, be elected democratically. If we desire to perpetuate a dictatorship in South Australia—an increasingly powerful and more dictatorial dictatorship—we should support this Bill. If we desire, however, to provide some sort of democracy to this State then we should oppose it. However, our weapons are weak and have been deliberately blunted and broken. The power of the electors of this State has been filched from them. It is not easy to defeat a Bill such as this: one which is based on the rights and privileges of dictators. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

The Hon. A. W. Christian—No.

The SPEAKER—The voting must be unanimous, and there being a dissentient voice the honourable member must continue his remarks. No adjournment motion can be taken or leave to continue granted for another 15 minutes.

Mr. Macgillivray—It's a shocking state of affairs.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Our weapons for obtaining electoral rights have been blunted or taken from us. We now have to try to overcome the position by using stones and shanghais, but we believe the people are beginning to think along the same lines as we are. I should like to see a referendum taken on a Bill such as the one before us. I think the result would even rock the Premier from his pedestal of fame.

Mr. O'Halloran—The Government has cut a very sorry figure this afternoon.

Mr. Jennings—Miserable!

Mr. JOHN CLARK—The Parliament of South Australia is a complete negation of the Party system. I realize that some members have not much faith in the Party system.

Mr. Macgillivray—Hear, hear!

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Labor Party members are proud of the Party system, and I believe members of the Government Party are too. I

admit that it has its faults, but it is a bulwark of democracy throughout British countries and in most others.

Mr. O'Halloran—You except the countries behind the Iron Curtain?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Yes. I do not know their system of Government but I should think it is similar to that in South Australia where the wishes of the people are subordinate to the wishes of a few. We know what happens when the Party system collapses and one section gains complete control. We know what Hitler and Stalin were able to do under one-Party Government. Thousands of South Australians would agree that we no longer have Government by the people for the people, but Government by the few for the few, and elected by a few. That is not democracy. I do not think that any member who talks about decentralization like Mr. Shannon did can possibly believe he has a good argument.

Mr. O'Halloran—The trouble is that members opposite will not get up.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—It seems that many members opposite are having trouble with their legs. I am standing under difficulties because I have had little time to prepare my speech. Some members opposite seem to be writing industriously, presumably on this Bill.

Mr. Fred Walsh—They are playing noughts and crosses.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—That argument put forward by the member for Onkaparinga (Mr. Shannon) about decentralization was a specious one. Since I have been a member I have not heard anyone opposite give one adequate reason justifying the disparity between the population of country and city electorates. The wonderful picture Mr. Shannon painted of the head of the Gulf made me want to shift north, but I do not think he had his heart in it. South Australia is one State. It has no artificial boundaries. No, I am wrong: there are artificial boundaries, but there should not be any. What on earth is the difference between the man who lives in the metropolitan area and the man in the country? The electoral districts of Prospect and Gouger are contiguous. A man living in the north of the Prospect district, perhaps in Pooraka, could find his neighbour living in the south of Gouger having a vote worth three and one-third times the value of his vote. Could there be anything more absurd? Some members do not like the spirit of country *versus* city that sometimes creeps into our debates. All South Australians, whether living in the city or the country, are in the same State. They look

and act very much the same. A city man could very well be a country man tomorrow, yet we find this peculiar and dangerous discrimination deliberately fostered by Bills such as this.

Mr. Jennings—Many South Australians have shown their views at elections.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I do not know whether the people of Prospect have shown their views more clearly, but they have shown they know how to use the small voting rights that they have. Despite the interesting information given by Mr. Shannon, this clap-trap of having to look after our country areas at the expense of the city is plain nonsense.

Mr. O'Halloran—But the fact remains that the country areas are not being assisted.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—True. We have been told over and over again this pitiful story of the need for decentralization. The population of the city has increased enormously, particularly during the term of office of this Government, yet some members have been hypnotized by the silvery voice of the Premier.

Mr. Teusner—Do you suggest that the population in country areas has decreased?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—It has not increased nearly to the same degree as the population of Adelaide.

Mr. O'Halloran—Country areas have not held their natural increase for the last 18 years.

Mr. Fred Walsh—Do you think the Premier could hypnotize members opposite?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I do not know, but I have not yet felt his hypnotic influence.

[*Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.*]

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Before the tea adjournment I was proving that our electoral boundaries are not natural but artificial. Although I do not like this Bill I believe it is superior to its 1936 counterpart in one respect. In 1936 the single electorates were first introduced into this State in an unusual manner: Parliament heard nothing about the proposed set-up until the foul deed had been almost completed. In his second reading explanation of the 1936 Bill the then Attorney-General, the Hon. S. W. Jeffries, said the Government possessed a tentative scheme prepared by the Electoral Office. No reference to this matter had been made to Parliament up to that stage, although the Government had had much to say about it before the previous elections. The 1936 scheme was referred by Cabinet, not to Parliament, but to a committee comprising Judge Paine, the Deputy Returning Officer of

the State, and the Surveyor-General. That committee was given certain terms of reference, and the scheme was not brought to Parliament until August, 1936, when the Attorney-General introduced the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, which was later passed. It may be said to the credit of the Playford Government that its Bill is being introduced in the normal way.

To say that there is a ratio of two to one between country and city representation is wrong; the ratio is much greater than that. Imagine the outcry in this House and throughout the State if it were suggested in this House that each city member should be entitled to one vote and each country member to three votes. Such a suggestion would be laughed out of the Chamber, and much merriment would be occasioned throughout the State. What is going on in this State, however, is worse than that for the ratio of country to city representation is almost three and one-third to one. The alleged reason for this lop-sided ratio is the Government's conceit and deceit in what it terms its decentralization policy. With the exception of the Leigh Creek coalfield, which is in the district of Newcastle, all the newly-developed industrial projects about which we hear so much are in districts that are regarded as certain Labor seats. Further, after the proposed redistribution we cannot be sure which district Leigh Creek will be in, although I believe the new redistribution is merely a sop as the result of something that has been said in the press. Indeed, I doubt whether it will greatly alter the present iniquitous electoral set-up. It will be merely an expense on the taxpayers and further plunge them into the depths of gloom into which they have already been plunged by the present gerrymander.

It is time the public were given some figures to prove that all the Government's talk about decentralization is a sham. By way of interjection this afternoon one honourable member sought information on population trends and I am only too happy to give him certain information. I quote from the official report published by the Electoral Office after the 1953 State elections. Last year the total enrolment in the 13 metropolitan seats was about 279,000, or 62 per cent of the total State enrolments.

Mr. Frank Walsh—There have been big increases in some metropolitan seats since then.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Yes. In the 26 country seats there were about 170,000 electors, which was 38 per cent of the State's total enrolment.

Further, the 38 per cent in the country are represented by 26 members, and the 62 per cent in the city by only 13. This means that a country vote is worth 3.29 times the value of a city vote. This is no two to one principle; in fact the relation between country and city representation was never two to one. When the scheme was first introduced in 1936 it was about 2½ to one. Members may ask, "Why has the ratio become greater since 1936?" The reply is to be found in the lack of success of any decentralization scheme the Government may have pursued, although so far as I can see the only apparent decentralization scheme has been one to decentralize votes in favour of the Party in power. That seems a rather obvious scheme, and its result can be seen. Unfortunately, while the value of the country vote has increased the number of country voters has steadily decreased, and despite what has been said this afternoon by the member for Onkaparinga, the value of the metropolitan vote is steadily decreasing. A Government member may say to himself, "Let the people come to the city. Drive them in!" Perhaps from a certain objectionable point of view nothing matters so long as the Liberal and Country League holds the reins of office in its slippery iron fist. Indeed, I would prefer Government members, instead of hypocritically prating about decentralization, to say openly, "Let us keep the reins of Government in our hands by means of the gerrymander." Such an attitude would earn them more respect not only from other members but also from the public. Perhaps I did not fully understand the meaning of decentralization; indeed, the member for Torrens may be able to enlighten me with some facetious definition from *Websters Dictionary*!

We have been told repeatedly that the present electoral system was specially designed to improve country areas and lessen their disabilities, but it has been a ghastly failure in that respect. Since 1938 the total enrolment in the Port Adelaide electoral district has increased by 13,269 votes (the total enrolment of two average size country seats), in Glenelg by 11,305, in Burnside by 4,960, in Hindmarsh by 5,497, and in Semaphore by 9,115. The total increase in those five districts since 1938 has been 44,146, a 54 per cent increase. Most people, if they have swallowed the myth of decentralization in South Australia, naturally think that there should be a similar large increase in country districts. If members think that because there has been the increase in city electorates there will be another eight seats in the city, they will be wrong, because

that will not follow. On last year's election figures there was an increase of 576 in Albert, 577 in Angas, a decrease of 922 in Burra, a decrease of 917 in Eyre, 777 in Light, an increase of 833 in Newcastle, a decrease of 540 in Rocky River, 577 in Young and 480 in Frome. I could give others, but that is enough to give a fair sample of what is happening in country districts.

Mr. Brookman—Is it a fair sample?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Yes. I cannot give all the districts. I leave it to members to look at the figures for the various districts, and if the sample I have given is not a fair one then they can take me to task.

Mr. Brookman—You have not given one increase.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Yes. There was an increase in Newcastle, which includes Leigh Creek. I have tried to make the point that the extension of industry into country districts has been in Labor's strongholds such as Port Pirie and Stuart. I ask leave to continue my remarks.

The Hon. T. Playford.—No.

The SPEAKER—There being a dissentient voice, leave is not granted and the honourable may continue.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Mr. Brookman asked about figures for other districts, but his leader and his colleagues, running true to the form consistently shown in this debate, have refused me the right to continue my remarks so that I might get the figures. I cannot do what members opposite expect me to do in supplying figures, but I did make the offer to get them, and it was refused. I hope we will have the pleasure of hearing members opposite speak on this Bill. We will then be able to listen to praise for this abominable Bill. I regret that I have not got the full list of South Australian districts. If I had thought of it I could have brought the figures and also figures for Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. When I spoke on the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition I gave figures regarding various districts, and if I left out Alexandra I am sorry. There is no question that during the years this Government has been in office there has been a difference of eight per cent in the reverse direction in the matter of country and metropolitan percentages.

Mr. Brookman—Has the war affected the position?

Mr. JOHN CLARK—In most districts there has been a reduction in the number of electors.

Mr. O'Halloran—The country workers went to the war and the landholders stayed at home.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—If that is correct, it represents an even more sorry story than I have been depicting. In the country districts I have quoted there has been a nine per cent decrease. That is one per cent worse than the fair sample, because the overall picture shows that the country has slipped back to the extent of eight per cent. It is well for us to consider why this has happened. If the Government's decentralization policy were taken seriously we would expect an increase in country districts. There has been an influx at Radium Hill, Leigh Creek and Port Augusta because of the introduction of the highly commendable socialistic schemes, but what is the reason for the people coming from the country to the city? I have now the complete figures for all districts for the 1938 and 1953 elections. In 1938 Adelaide had 15,053 electors and 12,045 in 1953. Albert had 5,549 and 6,125. Alexandra had 6,534 and 8,269. I wish members would not take so much convincing on this matter. I do not deny that there have been increases in some districts and decreases in others, but my point is that there has been an eight per cent decrease overall in the country as compared with the metropolitan area. I think I have satisfied Mr. Brookman. I have successfully advertised, as I think, he desired, that his district is capably represented and that the number of electors has increased. I congratulate him.

Mr. Brookman—You quoted only figures to suit your case.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—Despite the commendable increase of about 2,000 in the honourable member's district and the increase in places where there has been industrial expansion, there has been an overall decrease of eight per cent. The percentages are about 62 for the metropolitan area and 38 for the country. One member reminded us this afternoon that November 5 marked 16 years of rule for Mr. Playford as Premier. I have no doubt that was celebrated with due acclaim in certain quarters, but is that any reason why all the people in South Australia should be made guys? I now turn to the question of decentralization that we have heard so much about. In 1938 the country population in comparison with the city was nearly 8 per cent higher than today. During this much praised period, commonly known by some as the iniquitous gerrymander age or as the Playford epoch—it certainly is an epoch—decentralization has gone into reverse by 8 per cent, and no matter

how much we consider the figures we cannot make that any different. If the same Premier continues in office for another 16 years, which for many of us is a horrible possibility, and a very likely one under this legislation—

Mr. O'Halloran—This Bill is designated, as far as humanly possible, to permit it.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—It is, and if during that time the denudation of our country districts is accelerated at the same rate and in the same direction we will find that there will be 77 per cent in the city and 23 per cent in the country. Of course, the movement might be faster, and the way things are going that could easily be so. That is in the lap of the gods or of the Premier. Possibly that great god Demos that we heard mention of in a speech a few days ago had a great deal to do with it. With this Bill I shudder for the future as far as the ratio of country to city is concerned. After another 16 years, if the Premier still manages to continue in office, or if someone of his type, if that is possible, controls this State, we are likely to see some very large estates controlled by absentee landlords and the bulk of the people in the city. However, we can be sure that there will still be 26 seats in the country. We will then hear loud bleatings about decentralization. People are not all blind, deaf and stupid, and public contempt has been a mighty weapon throughout history on occasions too many to mention. No longer do people believe in this subterfuge known as gerrymander. They do not shut their eyes to the fact that this Government, so buoyed up with the confidence that comes to people after so many years of having their own way, has been prepared to introduce this Bill to perpetuate this sorry system. I am not sure whether it is arrogance or ignorance. Possibly it is arrogance built on self esteem, but it is ignorance of the will of the people. Most people have learned that the existing gerrymander, allegedly designed to assist people in the country, is not only a lie, but a contemptible lie. It is the worst type of prevarication. I can understand people saying things that are not true to get out of trouble, but when an untruth is calculated and planned it is the worst type possible. We must not be misled by this nonsense about two to one. That is violently untrue because it is three and one-third to one and the disparity is getting greater every day. If we must have two to one let us have it as far as electors are concerned. Let us make the country members have an electoral division of half

the number of constituents in a city electorate, because that would be two to one. There is no justification for this at all, but if it must be, and if this great god Demos has to sit up and watch it done, although it would be wrong it would be more just than the three and one-third to one that will be perpetuated by this Bill. Quite frankly, I cannot believe that this Parliament can pass this type of legislation, because it is the type that breeds Communists in a country that is supposed to be democratic.

Mr. O'Halloran—That is the worst feature of it.

Mr. JOHN CLARK—I agree. Most members detest the doctrines of Communism, but this legislation, which forbids people to put their will into effect, is the type to breed Communism, and, indeed, revolution. I find it hard to believe that members opposite, many of whom I claim as my friends, will be prepared to put their heads in the sand like ostriches and be blind to the true position. I do not wish to be unkind, but I do not believe one member opposite can possibly believe this Bill to be just. If they do I hope they rise to give a clear and detailed explanation of why it is necessary, and it will have to be a different story from this tale about decentralization, because that just does not wash. I appeal to members, although I do not know that it will be of much value, to break down that damaging, artificial barrier between those who live in the city and those outside it. Only a few miles outside Adelaide the people become country people with country privileges. I do not think the country people want this; I know people in my district do not, although I do not know whether it is a country or city district. All of us are South Australians, we all have similar problems, although they vary slightly because of local conditions and influences, and we all should have the same rights and privileges in voting for Parliament. It is no good saying that people in Spain, Morocco or a host of other places do not have one vote one value, because I would like to see one reason why they should not have. I oppose this Bill because I believe it to be the most vicious and unprincipled ever to come before this House. It is deliberately designed to thwart democratic government in this State. I appeal to all members to defeat it or amend it so that we need not in the future be ashamed of the mockery of this system when we speak to representatives of other Commonwealth countries. I know that when speaking about these matters to visitors from overseas a feeling of shame comes over

us, although there is no need for this on the part of members of the Opposition because we have fought hard without success to remove this stigma from our Parliamentary life. People in this State should be given the right to elect the Government they desire, and what a wonderful thrill it would be for them to have it because they have been denied it for so many years. I oppose entirely this intolerably unjust measure.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE (Burnside)—Strange as it may seem, and despite what has been said, this is a Bill to set up a Royal Commission. Clause 8 provides for representations to be made to the commission wherein those who have views to put before it can do so. I have no doubt that some of the views expressed here this afternoon by members of the Opposition might be acceptable to the commission. It is its function to consider all relevant representations. There is nothing which will restrict the powers conferred by the Royal Commissions Act, under which the Royal Commission will receive its authority and power. There are wide terms of reference, but there are some sign posts to delimit the width of these powers. Another Bill that was before the House not long ago gave certain directives to a Royal Commission, but now that the Government introduces a Bill with somewhat similar directives it is regarded as very improper. I recall the criticism elsewhere of another rather notable Royal Commission in the Federal sphere when criticism of the Bill to set it up centred in the fact that the powers of the commission were not adequately defined. We cannot have it both ways. If we have a commission we must define its duties, otherwise its report could be either valueless or inconclusive. I would hesitate to suggest that a Royal Commission is likely to bring in a biased report, as the member for Port Adelaide assumes it would.

Mr. Stephens—I did not say that. I asked if you were prepared to trust the Commission.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I am prepared to trust a Royal Commission set up under the terms of the Royal Commissions Act, 1917. It is customary when Royal Commissions of this kind are set up for a judge of the Supreme Court to be its chairman. We have no knowledge of the personnel of the proposed commission, but judging from custom one can assume that a judge of the Supreme Court would be the chairman. Governments of all political colours have called upon the distinguishing judiciary of Australia to be members of

commissions for all kinds of purposes. I have never heard a suggestion that the commissioners drawn from such illustrious ranks would present a biased report, nor have I seen a report of a Royal Commission which could not be trusted, as Mr. Stephens suggested. Grave responsibilities are placed on royal commissioners under the Act of 1917, and upon witnesses appearing before such commissioners. It is possible that members on the other side of the House may be witnesses before the Royal Commission, and it might therefore be worth while to remind them of some of the sections of the Royal Commissions Act which affect the conduct of witnesses. It is an indictable offence to interfere with witnesses, induce false testimony, withhold true testimony, obtain personal benefit or practice fraud or deceit.

Mr. Fred Walsh—How many members of the Government side will give evidence?

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I do not know, but I am pointing out that the greatest responsibility is laid upon witnesses who are called upon by a Royal Commission to give evidence. The Act also lays down the practice and procedure to be adopted by Royal Commissions. In case a judge should be appointed chairman of the commission, I remind the House that every British judge is a judge of the Queen's Courts. A Supreme Court judge has the same jurisdiction wherever he may be within the Queen's realms, and the judge whom Mr. Stephens is not prepared to trust—

Mr. Stephens—I did not say that at all, and you know it.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—You implied it. The honourable member suggested that a Royal Commission could not be trusted.

Mr. Stephens—I did not suggest anything of the sort.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—The honourable member asked me if I would trust it and I said I would, and because he persistently disagrees with everything I say I presume he would not trust it. It is an assumption which could be drawn from his interjections. According to *Halsbury's Laws of England* a judge of the Supreme Court takes a very grave oath indeed and swears that he will—

Well and truly serve our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth in the office of judge and will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm without fear or favour, affection or ill will. So help me God.

That is an oath what should reassure those who try to discredit a Commission before it is

appointed. It may be assumed that if precedent is followed a judge will be chairman of the proposed Royal Commission, and, he having taken such an oath, I have no fears on the matter, and I say to Mr. Stephens that such a Commission could be trusted. The oath is such that it should re-assure even him. A commissioner under those circumstances would show no fear or favour to anybody, and would interpret the commission given to him to the best advantage of all the people, which he is sworn to do. The member for Gawler said that the Government had been elected by a few. Let us consider the electoral history of the State over the last 16 or 18 years. Much has been said of a gerrymander. I have always understood that gerrymander is an electoral system by which a party ensures re-election. If that is not its meaning I do not know what it means. It is a system by which the Government assures its own re-election.

Mr. Jennings—It has been a very successful one here.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—If the gerrymander was successful in 1938 it was a funny kind of success because of the 39 members elected that year the Government returned only 15 candidates.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! Interruptions are out of order.

Mr. Fred Walsh—The honourable member should keep to the facts.

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—I thought I was in order in replying to misinformed statements regarding a gerrymander. If it had been a gerrymander in 1938, then the Government would have been returned with an overwhelming majority, which in fact it was not. The attaching of the name "gerrymander" to the electoral redistribution of 1938 is completely inappropriate, because under the electoral system which resulted from the re-allocation of seats in 1938 no fewer than eight seats have changed hands in the period under review.

Mr. Jennings—Eight seats out of 39—hurray!

Mr. GEOFFREY CLARKE—That is a very big margin to swing in 39 seats. If the Opposition had had a policy acceptable to the public it could have secured more seats than it has. I have seen a number of changes in the seats held by the Government and the Opposition which were completely divorced from any electoral allocation. It was on purely local issues. Consider, for instance, the change in the district of Murray which Labor had held since 1938 until the seat was won by Mr. White.

The seat of Torrens, when I came into this House, was held by a Labor member; Victoria, which is now held by Mr. Corcoran, over the previous seven or eight years had been held by a Liberal. Stanley has changed its political allegiance, and Light and Gouger, which are now held by the Liberal and Country League, were won from the Labor Party. None of these changes had anything to do with the allocation of electoral boundaries. The seats changed because of the Government policy being more acceptable than that of the Labor Party. Several of the seats which changed hands were won from Labor in spite of the fact that Labor had held them for many years.

The member for Prospect had much to say about the Legislative Council. I have heard, and believe it to be true, that the policy of the great united Labor movement is the abolition of the Upper House. As the Labor movement here stands fundamentally for the same things, whether good or bad, as the united, harmonious Labor Party throughout Australia, we would expect that the Labor Government of New South Wales, which is not only in office but in power, would have amended the provisions by which the Legislative Council is elected. In that State ex-servicemen and women do not have a vote for the Legislative Council and this also applies to householders, occupiers, or joint holders. The members of the Legislative Council in that State do not have to go before the electors for election. Under the so-called democracy which the Labor Government of New South Wales supports none of these democratic attributes of the Legislative Council in this State exist at all. No elector has any say in the nomination of candidates for the New South Wales Legislative Council, or ever hears a policy speech from a candidate for that House, or casts a vote for a candidate for that Chamber. The members of the Legislative Council in that State are elected by both Houses of Parliament sitting as an electoral college, and as Labor has a majority in both Houses the public have no say whatever and no vote. The doctrine of "one vote one value" means nothing to the great Labor Party in New South Wales. It says, "Do not give the people a vote at all." Yet the Opposition here today has hammered the point that democracy does not exist in this State. Let them in their own movement get a taste of democracy, and let us see what the Labor Party does itself when in office and in power. We can only judge what they would do here if they copied the practice of New South Wales. They are a completely united,

harmonious body and I am sure that the policy in New South Wales would be their policy in South Australia. The object of the Bill is to set up a Royal Commission, and I have no doubt that the royal commissioners appointed will interpret the Act fairly and in full recognition of the rights of the people of this State. I support the second reading.

Mr. LAWN (Adelaide)—I suggest that the Premier might well consider changing the title of this Bill. At present it is described as "An Act to provide for the appointment of a Commission to report upon the redivision of the State into electoral districts, and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto." The people would more readily understand it if it were described as the "Save our Seats Bill." The member for Burnside (Mr. Geoffrey Clarke) said that no previous speaker had properly explained the Bill and that he intended to do so. He referred to the Royal Commissions Act and to the Legislative Council in New South Wales, but that is about all he said. He was challenged during his speech as to whether or not he trusted Royal Commissions. I will have more to say about that later.

One might well ask whether the Government trusts the Royal Commissions appointed in South Australia. Last year it appointed a committee of inquiry into the licensing of taxicabs but it did not give that committee a free hand to recommend to the Government what it considered to be the best licensing authority. The Government restricted its terms of reference to some municipal body. In this Bill the Government does not ask for the appointment of a Royal Commission to make recommendations to the Government concerning our electoral laws but it restricts the work of the commission into dividing the State into 13 metropolitan and 26 country districts. No doubt the Government will later say "We are not responsible for the electoral set-up in South Australia. It was the result of the Royal Commission." Today they claim that the present electoral set-up is not the result of their doing, but the result of the commission set-up in 1936. The deciding factor in these matters is the terms of reference to the commission.

This is the most important Bill introduced into this House since 1936 and as such it is far above Party politics and should be treated by members as a measure deserving consideration in the interests of the people they claim to represent. The principles of

democracy, as I understand them, are Government of the people by the people for the people. The member for Gawler provided a good illustration of the existing position in South Australia when he said that we have the spectacle of Government of a few by a few for a few. The Government cut a sorry spectacle this afternoon. It revealed definitely that it is anxious to hurry this Bill through. Another principle of democracy is that the Legislature shall move slowly. It is all very well for the Premier to say that he gave the second reading speech on October 19, but the debate has been adjourned since then and it is now evident that the Government intends to rush this measure through without giving members the opportunity of considering the remarks of other speakers to it. It is also apparent that Government members have nothing to say in justification of the Bill. I do not exclude the Premier from that suggestion. That is evident when we consider that this afternoon we listened to the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Prospect, Norwood and Gawler. Four Labor members followed each other in succession, except for the intervention of the member for Onkaparinga, who said that he was not going to speak to the measure but for the incident of suspending the member for Norwood. The member for Gawler was down to follow the member for Norwood and the member for Onkaparinga said he had no intention of speaking but for that incident. Not one Government member had intended to speak to that stage and since then we have only heard one Government member and it is obvious to all members who were listening that the member for Burnside did not speak to the Bill and that he did not have anything to say to justify it. This Bill concerns the right of the people to elect a Government of its own choice and to change the Government if dissatisfied with it. In introducing the measure the Premier said:—

Its object is to provide for the establishment of a commission to report upon the redistribution of the State into electoral districts. There is no need for me at this stage to give honourable members any further information about the number of electors in the various electorates. The facts are well known and have been recently discussed in this Parliament.

Of course he did not want to give the facts. Of course he was right in saying that they have been given to Parliament. They have been given to Parliament every year since 1936 by the Opposition. The Opposition gives the facts and that is why Government members do not speak to this Bill. Similar Bills which have been introduced by the Leader of the Opposi-

tion were not debated by Government members because they could not debate them. They cannot face the true facts. Some of the country districts represented by members opposite have as few as 4,000 to 6,000 electors whereas the member for Port Adelaide represents over 35,000. We know that 30,000 people in the district of Port Adelaide are disfranchised and their votes are ineffective. The Premier also said:—

The Government takes the view that if all parts of the State are to be effectively represented in this Parliament it is not possible to have country electorates with the same number of electors as metropolitan electorates. Provision is therefore made in this Bill for maintenance of the existing relation between city and country representation.

If all parts of the State are to be effectively represented we must start off by placing all electors on an equitable basis and by providing that their vote shall be equally effective as the vote of the person next door or across the street. The member for Gawler this afternoon drew attention to the effectiveness of the votes of people living in the district of Prospect as compared with votes of those living across the road in the district of Gouger. The vote in Gouger is worth more than three times that of the vote of the elector in the district of Prospect. Those districts adjoin, but the voters living in Prospect have not the same representation as the voters living in Gouger. The Premier is misleading when he suggests that this Government is providing all parts of the State with effective representation in this Parliament. The Bill has to be camouflaged because the Bill itself is misleading.

After the proposed commission has reported the Government will say, "We did not gerrymander the districts in 1954. It was done by a Royal Commission." The Commission can only divide the metropolitan area into 13 districts and the country into 26 districts if this Bill is carried. The commission cannot say whether or not that procedure is justified. Over two-thirds of the people of this State live in the metropolitan area, but the Commission is not granted the right by the Government of saying whether this method of division is unfair. If the Royal Commission has not the confidence of this Government, it will have to do the same as a committee appointed last year did: draw the attention of the House to the fact that under its restricted terms of reference it had to make a certain recommendation. That is all that this proposed Commission can do. The Labor Party, of which I have the honour

to be a member, was only formed in 1893. Since that time it has been in office 17 years. The Verran Ministry held office from June 3, 1910, until February 17, 1912; the Crawford Vaughan Ministry from April 3, 1915, to July 14, 1917; the Gunn Government from April 16, 1924, to August 28, 1926; the Hill Government from August 28, 1926, to April 8, 1927, and again from April 17, 1930, to February 13, 1933; and the Richards Government from February 13 to April 18, 1933. In 1933 the Liberal Party came back into office, but what did it do? It said, "The Labor Party was in power from 1924 to 1927 and we held office from 1927 to 1930. We had another Labor Government from 1930 to 1933, so it seems that the people like to change the Government frequently." That did not suit the Liberal Government, for it did not want to be sacked at the end of three years. Therefore, it altered the Constitution Act to allow it to hold office until 1938. Perhaps it had in mind the five-year plan that had been adopted by Russia at the time. The Liberal Government also decided to adopt a policy of "Save our seats" by gerrymandering the electorates. It appointed a commission to divide the seats in the House of Assembly into 26 country electorates and 13 city electorates. It has been claimed that the then Premier, Sir Richard Butler, said that this would keep Labor out of office for 20 years. The Liberal and Country League Government went along sweetly until 1953, but the shock it got then was so great that it decided not to risk losing the election in 1956 under the present system. It therefore decided to appoint a secret committee, as it did in 1936, and the member for Gawler dealt with that this afternoon. That committee was appointed to report to the Government in 1936 before the Electoral Bill was introduced. When its report was received it was referred to a commission. I heard last year what the Government proposed doing to make sure that the districts were further gerrymandered because it went close to defeat in 1953. On November 17, 1953, I asked the following question:—

Can the Premier say whether it is a fact that the Government has appointed a secret committee to consider and report upon altering the electoral boundaries of some of the metropolitan electoral districts by transferring that area between the South Road and the Keswick Bridge from the district of Glenelg to the district of Adelaide with the object of making Glenelg safe for the Liberal and Country League at the next election, and to make similar alterations to the districts of Torrens and Unley with the same object?

Labor members know that the Government wanted to make the districts of Glenelg, Unley and Torrens safe, otherwise it would lose office. Actually, the people sacked this Government in 1953.

Mr. John Clark—They cannot sack it.

Mr. LAWN—No, but they showed their contempt for it, as they have done at many elections. In 1953 the people gave the Labor Party a majority of 47,000 votes over the Liberal Party. They gave a majority to Labor of 6,000 over the combined votes of Liberal, Independent and Communist candidates, yet the Labor Party has only 14 members compared with the Government's 21. The people cannot sack their Government if they are dissatisfied with it. This is a disgrace to democratic principles. One cannot properly describe the actions of this Government, otherwise he would be where the member for Norwood is now.

I shall quote from an editorial in the *News* that was published after last year's elections. No one could suggest that the *News* is a Labor Party organ. I understand it is part of the Murdoch press. The editorial of March 9, 1953, states:—

The Playford Ministry has been returned with a majority, dependent on final counting in Unley, of either three or five over its Labor opponents. Yet almost exactly three out of every five South Australians who voted on Saturday preferred Labor candidates to Mr. Playford's supporters. Labor may well claim to have lost the election, but to have proved up to the hilt its claim that under the present distribution of electorates the majority will in this State is effectively muzzled. The question now arises: Is the Premier prepared to recognise the flagrant anomalies of the existing system, and, disregarding party interest, to set up an electoral commission to institute reform? No playing with words can conceal the fact that where the votes of only two-fifths of the people are able to flout the will of half as many again, there is not effective democracy.

The Premier is not big enough to recognize the flagrant anomalies of the present system. On the contrary, he wants to perpetuate them. He cannot play with words, nor can any other Government member, to justify the Bill. The Right Honourable R. G. Casey, Commonwealth Minister for External Affairs, is a member of the Liberal Party. The *Advertiser* of April 30, 1954, stated:—

The Australian External Affairs Minister (Mr. Casey) told the 19-nation conference on Korea today that he hoped the South Korean Government would agree to elections throughout Korea "if it were in the interests of a final settlement." We believe, of course, that the elections should be based upon fair proportionate representation as between North and

South—that a free atmosphere both before and during the elections must be assured by specific guarantees—and that the elections should be held under the United Nations supervision.

In the first place I should like to ask whether the number of members of both Assemblies on the commission would be proportionate to the number of inhabitants in the parts of Korea represented by those Assemblies, or if not, on what basis they would be represented. As Mr. Dulles has pointed out, the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, although a far larger body than the National Assembly of South Korea, represents far fewer people. It would seem to be quite unreasonable to have a joint body which was not based upon the relative size of the population in the North and South.

Mr. Casey said that representation in the National Parliament of Korea must be based on the relative populations of North and South Korea. In effect he said, "No gerrymander" and my Party demands that South Australians be given the same right that Mr. Casey advocated for Koreans. Charity begins at home, and we should not tell Asians what to do if we are not prepared to give the same privileges and rights to our own people.

Mr. Hutcheus—"First cast the beam out of thine own eye" as the Good Book says.

Mr. LAWN—Unfortunately, members opposite do not know of the existence of such a book because their actions are contrary to the principles of Christianity as I know them. We are taught to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and I wonder what the attitude of Government members would be if they were in opposition and denied access to the Government benches even though the people of South Australia wanted them there.

Mr. O'Halloran—One of the faults of the Government is that it has substituted its so-called principles for first principles.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. The member for Mitcham (Mr. Dunks) has often told us that he believes in the principle of the survival of the fittest, which is completely contrary to the teachings of the Good Book. Christ did not teach that principle, but told us to help the weak and to see that people got justice. This Government, however, is not prepared to dispense justice and say to the people, "You may elect a Government of your own choice." The Playford Government has the electoral set-up sewn up the same as it is sewn up in Russia and other countries behind the Iron Curtain; yet in this State it is done in such a way that people continue to think they have the right to elect the Government they want. Immediately prior to the 1953 State elections Mr. Travers, now the member for Torrens,

addressed electors at North Adelaide. The *Advertiser* of March 4, 1953, reported him as saying on that occasion that he had the greatest confidence in the soundness of judgment of the ordinary man in the street. The report continues:—

Apart from his ordinary contacts in the everyday affairs of business, he had seen them working over a long period of years under difficult circumstances as jurymen. It was in those circumstances that one could best judge the fundamental soundness and commonsense of fellow men. People of soundness, uninfluenced as they will be by any hysteria imported from the eastern States, could size up the problem presented to them on Saturday.

Was the elector ever before given such a rap-up?

Mr. Travers—And he showed at the 1953 election that he merited it.

Mr. LAWN—Members on this side believe he does merit it, yet Government members, including Mr. Travers, apparently do not trust the electors because they refuse to give city and country electors equal representation in this House. At the 1953 election the very people who were described by Mr. Travers as sound and reasonable showed a preference for the Labor Party by giving them a majority of almost 50,000 votes. In effect they said, "Sack the Playford dictatorship! We want a Labor Government!" Probably Mr. Travers still really distrusts South Australian electors for no doubt he intends to vote for this Bill.

Mr. O'Halloran—I do not think he will.

Mr. Travers—I think I will!

Mr. LAWN—If the honourable member proves my supposition wrong I will apologize, but I doubt if I will have to do so. The honourable member was speaking with tongue in cheek to the workers of North Adelaide, hoping to get their votes by praising their soundness of judgment and honesty; now he shows that he has no confidence in the electors. Over the years Labor has always had country members and at all times it has endeavoured to serve the State as a whole. It does not represent only the metropolitan area. It now holds Victoria, Stuart, Wallaroo, Frome, Port Pirie and Gawler, and the members for those districts represent the State as a whole much better than country members opposite. Since the Playford Government has been in office thousands of people have been driven from the country to the city. The Playford Government makes all sorts of promises at election times. Deep sea ports can be established anywhere. The only thing not promised by the Premier in the Gawler campaign was a deep

sea port. For years fishermen everywhere have been promised boat havens. There has been no complaint about the Commonwealth electoral system. The most rabid Liberal and Country League partisan could not object to such a fair system. Mr. Geoffrey Clarke spoke about the Legislative Council in New South Wales. I do not know why, but the position there suits both the Liberal and the Labor Party.

Mr. O'Halloran—The position was created by the Liberal Party.

Mr. LAWN—Yes. It was wrong for Mr. Geoffrey Clarke to say that South Australia should be condemned because of something happening in New South Wales. If I were to run over the honourable member with my motor car would he be justified in running over me with his motor car? In New Zealand both the Liberal and the Labor Party have agreed that there should be no Legislative Council, and in Australia all Parties agree on the Commonwealth electoral set up, which is fair and just. That is what we want in South Australia. Our present system is a fraud on the electors and an insult to their intelligence. It abrogates one of the main principles of democracy, that of giving the people the right to elect a Government of their choice. There is no justification in an alleged democracy for a system which permits a minority Party to hold the reins of government. We have heard much about minority Governments in Russia and Germany, and we are told that the Communist regime in China is a minority government. We have one in South Australia. We have seen dictatorships in Russia and Germany. At the last elections about 47,000 voters in South Australia said they wanted to sack the Playford dictatorship, but the Government has replied by introducing a Bill to perpetuate the dictatorship. When Sir Richard Butler was Premier he tried to pass legislation to keep Labor out of office for 20 years, and this Government intends to keep Labor out for ever. The electors are shackled now with a Government that denies them a fair vote and it should not be tolerated. Every Sunday night at 7.15 from Station 5AD there is broadcast a play entitled "You Can't Win." I suggest to the authors that one could be written about the electoral set-up in this State. It would draw a greater listening public than the present plays. It could well be entitled "You Can't Win."

Mr. BROOKMAN (Alexandra)—After listening to the speeches of members of the Opposition one might be tempted to wonder where

are the concentration camps with all the tyranny that they have talked about this afternoon. As a matter of fact we live in one of the best governed communities to be found anywhere. There is less discontent and restriction on the freedom of people in this State than almost anywhere that could be quoted. Not one member opposite who made all those wild statements was able to quote a country where a system is in force such as they have been so freely advocating today. I deplore the immoderate use of adjectives and the bad punishment that the English language has taken this afternoon and this evening. The use of adjectives was, to my mind, rather degrading and did no credit to the speakers. First, the honourable member for Prospect (Mr. Jennings) strained every minute to bring more and more adjectives into the debate and to make himself objectionable, and his failure to make a marked impression was due to his successors who tried even to outdo his performance. It is rather pitiful in a debate such as this that members should use the hot-headed rather than the objective argument, because if we are to get anywhere we should not attempt to sway the House with what might be called soap-box oratory. In place of that we should use proper arguments based on moderate thoughts.

I support the Bill. I believe it is an amendment to a well tried system that has given good results to South Australia. As everyone will realize, in Australia, and particularly in South Australia, there is a very strong centralizing tendency. It cannot be denied that that is a natural tendency, and that is so obvious that it need hardly be said. It has been brought about partly through a shortage of good sea ports and partly through poor natural water supplies in the interior of this State and the lack of power supplies.

Mr. O'Halloran—Haven't you heard of the Port Augusta power station?

Mr. BROOKMAN—I will answer the Leader's interjection later. This State has no natural power resources, and centralizing tendencies are strong. It must be pointed out to members opposite that decentralization, to put it in perhaps the worst way, means an uncentralizing tendency. The population in this State has not spread out as in Queensland where there are seaports, good rainfall areas and fertile soil all along the coast. These factors have permitted settlement right along the coast and probably nobody worries very much about decentralization because it has already

occurred. This Government has countered centralizing tendencies by establishing a great many public works to bring the necessary power, water and other facilities to the country to make people desire to decentralize. It has been quoted to us often during this debate that the metropolitan area has 60 per cent of the total population, but one small city, because it has 60 per cent of the population should not necessarily have a proportion of votes on the basis of its population. Adelaide probably extends for 10 or 15 miles square whereas the State extends for about 300 miles in every direction and I do not want to see it governed by the people living in a few square miles, because I believe that its strength lies in its agricultural production. Although our secondary industries have made great strides, they have scarcely built up an export trade, and it is from our export trade that we derive our standard of living.

It is not pleasing to hear the wild and exaggerated statements that we have heard from members opposite, particularly when we consider what some of them believe. I do not know whether it is the policy of the Party or not, but I believe most members of the Opposition believe there should not be any State Parliaments. Assuming that that is their policy and that they are true to it, if they gained power they would set about to abolish this Parliament.

Mr. CORCORAN—The Labor Party policy does not stand for the abolition of State Parliaments. The honourable member is talking about the expressions of opinion of individual members.

Mr. BROOKMAN—The policy of the Labor Party is not easy to understand and members have never given a statement of it. Very often I have asked members opposite their attitude on this matter and they have phrased their answers very carefully. If the Labor Party does not believe in the abolition of the State Parliament, it has a few awkward customers to deal with. The member for Port Adelaide believes in the abolition of State Parliaments, as also does the member for Norwood. That rather colours the argument of honourable members opposite when they criticize the Government for bringing in this Bill. I object to the immoderate use by members opposite of such words as "dictatorship" and "totalitarianism," which seem a ridiculous exaggeration when applied to South Australia. It gets tiresome to hear members opposite saying such things when we know that they have such illogical views on such

questions as compulsory unionism and the right to dismiss members of their own Party if they do not agree with them. All the Bill sets out to do is to provide for the appointment of a Royal Commission to divide the State into 39 electorates. It is asked to divide the metropolitan area into 13 approximately equal Assembly districts and to divide country areas into 26 approximately equal districts. In doing so it is to have regard to certain other factors apart from that of population.

Mr. Davis—What are the other factors?

Mr. BROOKMAN—The common interests of electors and the shape of electorates, and to provide reasonable means of access between the main centres of population therein. The last condition is to retain as far as possible the boundaries of existing districts and subdivisions. Does not the Opposition think these things should be considered, or do they contend that population is the only matter which should be considered by the commission? All these factors are of great importance in the subdivision of electorates, and they are. I believe, considered by every authority which is called upon to draw up electoral boundaries in any democracy. Most of those conditions were taken into account in England not long ago when new electoral boundaries were drawn up. In contemplating this legislation it is necessary to look at the country electorates and have regard to the differences in the type of problems with which they have to contend. Among the most important problems of country electorates are those of electricity and water supplies, and the transport of children for long distances to schools. Those problems are not nearly so pressing in the metropolitan area.

The member for Gawler quoted certain figures to show how some country electorates had decreased in numbers since 1938. I take exception to the fact that he quoted only four or five, and then claimed that he was referring to a cross section. The differences in numbers for various electorates between 1938 and 1953 were:—Albert, increase 576; Alexandra, increase 1,735; Angas, increase 577; Burra, decrease 922; Chaffey, increase 1,609; Eyre, decrease 917; Flinders, increase 1,353; Frome, decrease 480; Gawler, increase 656; Gouger, increase 1,372; Gumeracha, increase 685; Light, decrease 777; Mount Gambier, increase 2,236; Murray, increase 744; Newcastle, decrease 833; Onkaparinga, increase 1,218; Port Pirie, increase 1,361; Ridley, decrease 379; Rocky River, decrease 540; Stanley, decrease 444; Stirling, increase 594; Stuart, increase 5,538; Victoria, increase 3,317; Wallaroo,

decrease 468; Yorke Peninsula, decrease 262; and Young, decrease 587. Of those 26 country electorates, 16 have increases in the number of electors on the roll and 10 have decreases. These are the real figures, some of which the member for Gawler quoted to suit himself. The figures could be commented on in this way: every electorate south of Adelaide has increased in electoral numbers, some to the north have decreased, one in the west has decreased and in the east there may have been some decrease. Those in the south have increased markedly, not because of vast industrialization but because of agricultural advances. Since 1938 the wetter districts south of Adelaide have been brought into prominence because of improved methods devised by scientists. Machinery has enabled the clearing of heavier country; higher prices for produce have permitted the payment of that machinery, and agricultural discoveries have resulted in great improvements. The Leader of the Opposition's district is in the north-east of the State and is decreasing in numbers. He sees signs of settlement becoming more sparse and I am sure he is influenced by that in his view that the agriculture of the State is declining. In fact, if he examined the wetter districts he would be amazed as to how they have improved.

I commend this Bill, which is full of the wisdom and common-sense that has always characterized the South Australian Parliament. I suggest that we be not carried away by the hot-headed use of adjectives but follow our calm judgment and support the measure. Mr. Lawn concluded his remarks by referring to the interests of the country. The Liberal country members of this Parliament have always served the State as a whole and will continue to do so.

Mr. CORCORAN (Victoria)—I make it clear from the outset that I oppose this Bill, which provides for the appointment of a commission to report upon the redivision of the State into electoral districts and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto. My objection is that the commission has no authority to act otherwise. If the commission were appointed to consider the entire electoral set-up and make recommendations as to what it thought best to place it on a more equitable basis it would be quite acceptable, but the Bill provides that the commission must respect the present set-up. In other words, 13 members are to be elected for the metropolitan area from the House of Assembly districts of Torrens, Prospect, Adelaide, Thebarton, Hindmarsh, Semaphore, Port

Adelaide, Norwood, Burnside, Unley, Mitcham, Goodwood and Glenelg. According to figures quoted, they represent approximately 62 per cent of the electors of this State. The anomalies and discrepancies the Opposition object to and the elimination of which it attempted to provide for in the Leader of the Opposition's Bill are to remain. Another principle we believe should be respected is that of one vote one value, and to make some districts less cumbersome we suggested that there should be an increase in the membership of this House.

The commission will be instructed that the present set-up is not to be altered. It has no authority to suggest ways and means of establishing the principle of one vote one value. The Premier has made abundantly clear his attitude on that principle. He told us that he was not going to be worried about it. I am trying to visualize the size of some of the districts after the redivision. The Bill provides for equal numbers of electors or as nearly equal as possible. There is a tolerance to be observed. I am anxious to see how various districts will be cut up. There are about 10,700 electors in my district. I do not know whether they will be added to or whether some will be taken from it. It does not matter how long we talk or what we say, this Bill will pass because Government members will support it. Although not many have spoken I am sure of what they will do. However, we oppose it because we believe a vital and fundamental principle should not permit its being passed. No argument yet advanced will lead us to accept only one representative for the metropolitan area for every two for the country, leading to a country vote being worth three and one-third times more than a city vote. That is unreasonable. I can understand members opposite not wishing to debate this Bill. Probably it does not appeal to them, but they have to do the right thing by their Government. We know the conditions that existed in 1936 when the gerrymander was first perpetrated, but they have changed since. For instance, there has been a constant flow of people from the country to the metropolitan area. The member for Alexandra (Mr. Brookman) just said that the population of some country districts has increased, but it has not increased to the same extent as the population of the metropolitan area. It is generally accepted that this trend must be arrested. We boast of our democratic institutions.

Mr. Jennings—Who do?

Mr. CORCORAN—Labor Party members do not, but most people contend that our Parliament is a democratic institution because every man and woman over the age of 21 years has a vote. However, it does not mean that this Parliament is a democratic institution. The fact remains that the people have not the right to elect members on a democratic basis. At the last elections the Labor Party had a majority of 47,000 votes over the Liberal Party. Although we won the election we did not win the Government. That supports my statement that this House is not a democratic institution, nor is the Legislative Council. In the other place we have four members and the Liberal and Country League has 16, all elected on a restricted franchise. The people who elect them total about one-third of those who have the right to elect the House of Assembly. All legislation passed by this House, except money Bills, has to be approved by that Chamber. That is not democratic. We are proud of our national Parliament because it is elected on a democratic basis. When the number of electors in a Federal constituency differs by more than 20 per cent from the average the boundaries must be readjusted. Compared with the proposals in this Bill, the anomalies that existed as a result of the gerrymander in 1936 were nothing to complain of. The time is overdue for a readjustment of electoral boundaries, but the commission will not be able to do this on a democratic basis. The Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition proposed 45 members for the House of Assembly, and this was sanctioned by the House.

Mr. O'Halloran—The House supported that clause.

Mr. CORCORAN—Yes, yet we now have this Bill which cuts across that principle.

The SPEAKER—I remind the honourable member that that was a Bill to amend the Constitution, but this is not.

Mr. CORCORAN—I know, but this Bill will not allow the commission to do its job properly.

Mr. Jennings—The Government doesn't trust the commission.

Mr. CORCORAN—Surely it is not afraid that the commission will do the wrong thing. If it were given a free hand the Government could not be accused of trying to retain the reins of office as it has for years. Although a few country districts are represented by Labor members country areas, in the main,

support the Liberal and Country League. This has been responsible for the Government retaining office. If it appointed a commission to consider electoral boundaries impartially it could not be criticized and we would accept whatever recommendations were made.

Mr. John Clark—And the Government would be respected for it.

Mr. CORCORAN—Yes. The commission should be entrusted with full responsibility in this matter. A system that permits a Party to retain office although defeated by 47,000 votes is not sound. Because of the Labor Party's agitation on this question a certain feeling has developed among the public as it has become aware of the facts. Indeed, there has been an urge from within the Liberal movement to put the electoral system on a democratic basis, and in introducing this Bill the Premier merely wishes to show that he is trying to introduce a more democratic system. Members on this side, however, after listening to the Governor's speech had hoped that something more would be done in this matter. The people will ultimately pass judgment on members who vote for this Bill. I believe that those who support the Bill will be responsible for the eventual downfall of the Playford Government. Members of my Party believe in fighting for the true principles of democracy, and they will continue to do so as long as they have breath. Whether we win on this occasion remains to be seen, but a single defeat would not cause us to cease in our efforts for electoral justice. Every session we try to convince the Government of the need for a more democratic electoral set-up, but we fail merely because the Government has the numbers. I trust the Government will reconsider this matter and give the commission full responsibility.

The House divided on the motion of Mr. Frank Walsh, "That this debate be now adjourned":

Ayes (14).—Messrs. John Clark, Corcoran, Davis, Hutchens, Jennings, Lawn, Macgillivray, O'Halloran, Quirke, Riches, Stephens, Stott, Frank Walsh (teller), and Fred Walsh.

Noes (17).—Messrs. Brookman, Christian, Geoffrey Clarke, Dunks, Dunnage, Goldney, Hawker, Heaslip, Jenkins, Michael, Pattinson, Pearson, Playford (teller), Shannon, Teusner, Travers, and White.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. FRANK WALSH (Goodwood)—The Government has always said that it does not apply the gag, and that statement has been

upheld by yourself, Mr. Speaker. If the vote we have just had does not indicate a gag, then I do not know what does.

Mr. Travers—It is not a gag.

Mr. FRANK WALSH—Government members have been well and truly gagged in this debate. Today the Premier gave notice of motion that as from tomorrow Government business will take precedence over private members' business. Earlier in the session he asked for the co-operation of the Opposition in sitting two nights each week until about 9.30 p.m. What do we find? When the Premier is absent seldom does the House sit at night, despite the fact that Opposition members have foregone engagements in order to do so. It is now 10.15 p.m. and despite moves for the adjournment of the debate the Premier will not agree, yet it is said the gag is not applied. I will not support the second reading of the Bill. One clause defines the metropolitan area. Another sets up a commission comprising three members, any two of whom shall be a quorum. The measure perpetuates an unsatisfactory electoral system. Last session I was castigated because of a speech I made on one Bill. I was accused of not giving enough information, but in the Premier's second reading explanation of this measure very little information was given. He said the Government believes that if all parts of the State are to be effectively represented in this Parliament it will not be possible to give country districts the same number of electors as districts in the metropolitan area. Statistics show that 61 per cent of the State's population is in the city and therefore we cannot expect anything better. Mr. Brookman referred to the progress made in primary production, particularly in southern areas. A comparison of the general and supplementary rolls for the last Commonwealth elections shows that the greatest increase in the number of voters in the honourable member's district was in the subdivision of Morphet Vale. The addresses of the electors were mostly Christies Beach and Port Noarlunga. I do not know of any primary production in those areas. In view of the good bus services from this district we could say it is practically in the metropolitan area, and that is where the greatest increase has occurred in any of the four subdivisions in the electoral district of Alexandra. This bears out the Premier's contention that we cannot expect numerically the same representation in the city as in the country.

As revealed by the electoral roll prepared for last year's Federal elections, Glenelg has the second highest number of electors in this State, and it has four subdivisions. The Electoral Commission must take into account the type of electors in each subdivision. Assuming they are primary producers I assume that they will be taken into primary-producing areas. In the subdivision of Brighton in the division of Glenelg, there is much country that it not thickly populated, and it adjoins the electorate of Alexandra. I wonder whether the commissioners will consider adding the portion of that district from Seacombe Road to the seafont, excluding that from Marino to Reynella, to Alexandra. That would certainly reduce the Brighton subdivision by a couple of hundred electors and would increase the number in Alexandra probably to about the quota set by the commission. The 13 metropolitan districts are nominated in the Bill, and I do not know what area is to be taken for Adelaide. I know that it has a western subdivision and that it is bounded by parklands, but whether it is to be extended in a northerly or westerly direction I do not know. Perhaps the Government will advise the commission in the terms of reference, because to suggest that it would not have any influence on them would be misleading in view of the stubbornness shown in refusing to adjourn the debate. If we wish to keep as near as practicable to the present subdivisions, there will be very little alteration in the districts recognized as industrial areas. Probably in the districts of Port Adelaide, Semaphore and Hindmarsh, all more or less industrial districts, one could not expect any material alteration under this Bill. There are residential areas in the district of Mitcham as well as land used for primary production. If it is a question of representing so many square miles of country the position in this district should be investigated, because after all it is recognized as a metropolitan district. I do not know whether the commissioners can rectify this position, because some of the district is not in what is commonly known as the metropolitan area.

I assume that the Bill will be carried, and because of the stubbornness of the Premier it will have to go through tonight. The Government has a majority in the House and is using it to force this legislation through, and maintain some of the unfairness associated with the present set-up of the single electorate system. Two wrongs do not make a right. The Government has overplayed its hand in this matter. The Bill provides for a tolerance of

20 per cent in district quotas. If we consider a quota as being 20,000 and allowing for a 20 per cent tolerance either way, we could have a difference of 8,000 electors. The quota could be as low as 16,000 in some districts compared with 24,000 in others. Such a tolerance is too great. I have already indicated that I am opposed to the second reading, but in the event of the Bill reaching Committee I shall reserve any further remarks to that stage. In view of the courtesy extended by the Oppo-

sition to the Government, I am disappointed that it did not see fit to grant an adjournment of the debate earlier as requested. The Government has deliberately set itself out to adopt what is known as the gag.

Mr. MACGILLIVRAY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 10.35 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, November 17, at 2 p.m.