

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, April 17, 1968

The SPEAKER (Hon. T. C. Stott) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITIONS: ELECTORAL REFORM

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN presented a petition signed by 74,916 electors. It stated that the results of the State elections held on March 2, 1968, did not truly reflect the wishes of the majority of electors, and it prayed (1) that, to provide effective representation for all citizens upon the basis of one vote one value, the electorates for the House of Assembly should be increased to 48 and boundaries for these electorates drawn by an independent commission on substantially similar instructions to those given to the Commonwealth Electoral Commission; and (2) that new elections should be held on the basis of the new electoral system so provided, as soon as possible.

Mr. JENNINGS presented a petition signed by two representatives of the South Australian Country Party. It stated that, whereas the State Parliament had expressed the need for electoral reform in this State and both Parties had advocated only redistribution as a means to this end and had suggested an increase in the number of members of Parliament by increases in urban electorates and a reduction in rural electorates, the South Australian Country Party considered that the electoral reform needed should be investigated in all its aspects on a level above Party politics. It prayed that the House of Assembly urge the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the constitution of the Legislature, as set out in the Constitution Act of South Australia, with a view to adding to or altering the Act and to report back to Parliament not later than June 30, 1969, with the necessary recommendations; the Royal Commission to consist of five people: a judge of the Supreme Court as Chairman, the Surveyor-General, the State Electoral Officer, and the accepted authorities at the University of Adelaide in Political Science and Constitutional Law. It further prayed that no restrictions be placed on the terms of reference.

Petitions received and read.

MINISTRY

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier): I take this opportunity of informing the House of the fact that His Excellency the Governor

informed me yesterday that the Hon. Mr. Dunstan had handed in the resignation of his Ministry, and that His Excellency had commissioned me to form a new Government. I have to inform the House that, in pursuance of this Commission, the following Ministry was sworn in today: The Hon. R. S. Hall, M.P.; Premier; the Hon. R. C. DeGaris, M.L.C., Chief Secretary, Minister of Health and Minister of Mines; the Hon. G. G. Pearson, M.P., Treasurer and Minister of Housing; the Hon. D. N. Brookman, M.P., Minister of Lands, Minister of Repatriation, Minister of Irrigation and Minister of Immigration and Tourism; the Hon. C. R. Story, M.L.C., Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Forests; the Hon. J. W. H. Coumbe, M.P., Minister of Works, Minister of Marine and Minister of Labour and Industry; the Hon. R. R. Millhouse, M.P., Attorney-General, Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs; the Hon. Joyce Steele, M.P., Minister of Education; and the Hon. C. M. Hill, M.L.C., Minister of Local Government, Minister of Roads and Minister of Transport. The Government Whip will be Mr. W. A. Rodda, M.P.

OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Leader of the Opposition): Before informing the House of the Opposition office holders who were elected today, I personally tender the congratulations of Opposition members to members of the new Ministry. I wish to inform the House that this day the following Opposition office holders were elected: Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. D. A. Dunstan, M.P.; Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. D. Corcoran, M.P.; and Opposition Whip, Mr. G. R. Broomhill, M.P.

QUESTIONS

CHOWILLA DAM

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: During the period of office of the previous Government, suggestions were made by the Commonwealth Minister for National Development and certain of the Commissioners of the River Murray Commission that work on the Chowilla dam should be either deferred indefinitely or postponed to enable other major works and undertakings to proceed on the Murray River. The instructions given by the former Government to our Commissioner were that, in the event of any motion to this effect coming before the commission, the Commissioner must vote against such a motion, be it for

either deferment or indefinite postponement of work on the Chowilla dam, and so create the necessary dispute under the River Murray Waters Act. Can the Treasurer (or, if not, the appropriate Minister) say whether the present Government intends to maintain those instructions and ensure that South Australia, in the event of there being a majority of votes against this State's proceeding with the Chowilla dam, creates the necessary dispute so that this matter may go to arbitration in terms of the Act?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: We have embarked on an urgent examination of the position as it was left by the former Government and I assure the Leader of the Opposition that our efforts during the recent election campaign and our public statements have indicated spontaneous advocacy of this proposal. I assure the Leader that we will examine the stage at which his Government left those proceedings and that we will press ahead with the proceedings with the utmost expediency to ensure that South Australia receives this water storage as soon as possible. Although I am unable at this stage to give the details that the Leader requests, I hope he will accept my assurance that, as soon as we have complete details of the negotiations, the Minister of Works and I will be prepared to answer any question that the Leader has, in writing if the House is not sitting at that time.

Mr. ARNOLD: As I understand that a meeting of the River Murray Commission is to be held next Wednesday, and as the Chowilla dam project is of vital importance to my district and to South Australia generally, can the Minister of Works say whether he has had an opportunity to investigate the project?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: I have not had an opportunity to look into this question in any detail but I have taken certain steps to acquaint myself and the Government with the present position. After the House rises this afternoon I shall confer with the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Beaney), and tomorrow I shall go to Melbourne to attend a conference of the Water Resources Council of Australia in company with the Engineer-in-Chief. I shall spend quite a part of that day conferring with him on the question of the Chowilla dam. This whole matter will then be referred to Cabinet next Monday. I assure the honourable member that I am taking all possible steps to acquaint myself and other members of the Government with the position, because we realize the importance of this project not only to the honourable member's district but

to the whole of South Australia. I assure the House that whatever decision is arrived at eventually will be in the best interests of South Australia.

Mr. RICHES: Do I discern from the Minister's reply that there has been a change of heart on the part of the present Government regarding the Chowilla dam project, as distinct from the attitude it adopted a few months ago?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: No, I did not intend to convey that impression. All I said was that I had taken steps to inform myself, as the responsible Minister, on all aspects of this matter and to have the whole of the information brought up to date, because we as a Government have not had an opportunity to peruse the files. This information will be made available to Cabinet on Monday next.

Mr. HUDSON: Does the Minister stick by the statement made during the election campaign that a Liberal Government would build the Chowilla dam?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: The Government will take all possible steps to ensure that the Chowilla dam is constructed.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: That is not what you said.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In view of what the Minister has just said, do I understand that now qualifications are being placed on the unequivocal promise made by the present Government prior to the election that it would build the Chowilla dam?

The Hon. J. W. H. COUMBE: Mr. Speaker, I have made no qualifications at all today, and I have nothing further to add to the reply I gave to the previous question.

TRAFFIC INCIDENT

Mr. LAWN: If the Premier has not today the answer to my question, I shall understand that, but I should like a reply as soon as possible. In view of the grave public disquiet, will he make available to this House the report of the Commissioner of Police on the recent hit-run incident on South Terrace, Adelaide, which was alleged by the press to have been caused by a member of Parliament who later identified himself as the member for Ridley, who is now Speaker of this House?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I understand, from my brief knowledge of this case, that it is being treated by the Police Force as a routine

matter and that no charges are being laid and no offence exists on which charges will be laid. I understand that the report of the incident has been given to the police and that the normal routine handling of the case is now ensuing.

Mr. LAWN: I did not ask for the Premier's opinion. As my information is entirely different from that given to the House by the Premier, and as he has apparently now been briefed by the honourable member concerned (the Speaker), will the Premier now make the relevant information available to the House, either by way of a direct reply to my question or by tabling in this House the report of the Commissioner, and not merely give his own opinion?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I have nothing further to add to my previous answer.

GLENELG JETTY

Mr. HUDSON: During the recent election campaign the Premier said, on a couple of occasions to my knowledge, that if he were returned as Premier he would see that the Glenelg jetty was built as planned. In view of these statements, will the Premier give to the House and to the people of Glenelg an assurance that this project will proceed with all possible speed?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I assure the honourable member that this Government will not be in the habit of repudiating agreements made by another Government. The speed that we give to this project may well depend on the state of the finances left by the honourable member's Government in this State.

ROAD TAX

Mr. HUGHES: By way of explaining my question, I will read a letter, addressed to me from the District Clerk at Bute, which states:

In answer to a question during the last session of Parliament it was stated that surplus funds from the road maintenance tax were still being made available to councils for reconstruction of roads, as had been done previously. I would be pleased if you could supply me with a list of councils and the amounts they received from the Road Maintenance Fund over the last 36 months.

Will the Premier ask his colleague whether this information could be made available, perhaps by letter?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: I will try to obtain the information required, and let the honourable member have it at the earliest opportunity.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr. McKEE: Can the Premier say whether the Mallala District Council has received drought relief and whether his farm manager is now employed or ever was employed by that council?

The Hon. R. S. HALL: The member for Port Pirie either has been initiating these rumours or has been listening to them. Let me explain that certain rumours have been initiated, so far by persons unknown to me, that, first, I favoured my own district council in making certain successful representations for drought relief and, secondly, that machinery or employees of mine were involved in this project. I say quite frankly to the honourable member that I knew nothing of the granting of drought relief to any district council in my district until it had been granted, and that no employee or relative or machine of mine of any sort has been involved in any work conducted with money from those funds or any other funds by district councils.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Leader of the Opposition): I move:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move a motion without notice.

For the information of members, my motion will be that I have leave to introduce forthwith a Bill for an Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1934-1965.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the House, and there being present an absolute majority of members I submit the motion of the Leader to suspend Standing Orders. The question is "That the motion be agreed to." Those for the motion say "Aye", those against "No". There being a dissentient voice, there must be a division.

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (19)—Messrs. Broomhill and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Casey, Clark, Corcoran, Dunstan (teller), Hudson, Hughes, Hurst, Hutchens, Jennings, Langley, Lawn, Loveday, McKee, Riches, Ryan, and Virgo.

Noes (19)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Brookman, Coumbe, Edwards, Evans, Ferguson, Freebairn, Giles, Hall (teller), McAnaney, Millhouse, Nankivell, Pearson, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, Messrs. Teusner, Venning, and Wardle.

The SPEAKER: There are 19 Ayes and 19 Noes. There being an equality of votes, I give my casting vote for the Noes, and so the motion passes in the negative.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

Berri Primary School,
Bordertown Water Supply Augmentation,
Engineering and Water Supply Department Soils, Bitumen and Concrete Laboratory at Netley,
Modbury Hospital,
Parafield Gardens East Primary School,
Port Adelaide Roll-on Roll-off Berth,
Ridgehaven Primary School,
Roseworthy Agricultural College
(Remodelling of Wine Cellars),
Royal Park High School,
Seaview Downs Primary School,
Thevenard Harbour Improvements
(Channel Deepening and Jetty Reconstruction).

Ordered that reports be printed.

SOUTH-EASTERN DRAINAGE AND DEVELOPMENT (EASTERN DIVISION)

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report, by the Parliamentary Committee on Land Settlement, on South-Eastern Drainage and Development (Eastern Division) in respect of:

(1) an extension of the Mosquito Creek Inlet Channel and construction of the Struan Relief Drain; and

(2) extension of the Killanoola Main Drain and provision of three subsidiary drains.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That the Hon. B. H. Teusner be Chairman of Committees of the whole House during the present Parliament.

Motion carried.

COURT OF DISPUTED RETURNS

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That the House proceed to elect by ballot four persons to be members of the Court of Disputed Returns pursuant to sections 168 and 169 of the Electoral Act, 1929-1965.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, the Hons. D. N. Brookman, D. A. Dunstan, R. R. Loveday, and R. R. Millhouse were declared elected.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that a petition against the return of the Hon. J. D. Corcoran as member of the House of Assembly for the District of Millinent, signed by Martin Bruce Cameron, has been left with the Clerk of the House pursuant

to section 179 of the Electoral Act, 1929-1965, and that the Clerk has certified that \$100 has been lodged with him as security for costs.

The Hon. R. S. HALL moved:

That the petition be received and referred to the Court of Disputed Returns, which is hereby directed to meet on Monday, April 22, 1968, at 10.30 a.m. at Parliament House, Adelaide.

Motion carried.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that a petition against the return of Mr. P. B. Arnold as member of the House of Assembly for the District of Chaffey, signed by Arthur Reginald Curren, has been left with the Clerk of the House pursuant to section 179 of the Electoral Act, 1929-1965, and that the Clerk has certified that \$100 has been lodged with him as security for costs.

The Hon. R. S. HALL moved:

That the petition be received and referred to the Court of Disputed Returns.

Motion carried.

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That three members of the House be appointed, by ballot, to the Council of the University of Adelaide pursuant to the University of Adelaide Act, 1935-1964.

Motion carried.

While the ballot was being held:

Mr. HURST: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, is it proper that one of the candidates should act as scrutineer?

The SPEAKER: If I may be permitted to state from my long experience and knowledge of these ballots, I point out that every member is entitled to vote and that every member is a candidate in the ballot.

A ballot having been held, Messrs. Broomhill, McAnaney, and Wardle were declared elected.

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That three members of the House be appointed, by ballot, to the Council of the Flinders University pursuant to the Flinders University of South Australia Act, 1966.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, Messrs. Allen, Hudson, and Nankivell were declared elected.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

The SPEAKER laid on the table a copy of the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

Ordered to be printed.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:

Standing Orders: The Speaker, the Hon. R. R. Millhouse, and Messrs. Arnold, Lawn and Riches.

Library: The Speaker, and Messrs. Clark, Evans, and Venning.

Printing: Mrs. Byrne, and Messrs. Edwards, Ferguson, Giles, and Langley.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:
That, pursuant to section 4 of the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, Messrs. Freebairn, Hughes, and Ryan be elected members of the Joint House Committee.

Motion carried.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That the House request the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment for the present Parliament of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation in accordance with Joint Standing Orders Nos. 19 to 31, and that the representatives of the House on the said committee be the Hon. B. H. Teusner and Messrs. Ferguson and McKee.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. R. S. HALL (Premier) moved:

That the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, May 14, at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

At 3.34 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 14, at 2 p.m.