HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 12, 1975

The SPEAKER (Hon. J. R. Ryan) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PRE-MIXED CONCRETE CARTERS BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

SOUTHERN WATER SUPPLY

In reply to Mr. McANANEY (February 27).

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: A scheme for the laying of a pipeline from the Murray Bridge to Onkaparinga main from Callington to Strathalbyn has been prepared, but the proposal is not practicable because of the very poor economic return. It was considered, therefore that the whole area should be examined on a much broader basis, and that a multi-objective feasibility study should be made to determine and assess the total benefits that may be derived by the State from a water supply to Callington, Hartley, and Woodchester for both urban and rural areas. As the intended feasibility study will involve detailed considerations of economic growth, and social, agricultural and environmental aspects, some time will necessarily elapse before a decision can be made.

TRACK 4 CLASSES

In reply to Mr. OLSON (March 4).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: At present there are three special classes in secondary schools on LeFevre Peninsula, one being at LeFevre High School and the other two at Port Adelaide High School. Departmental information confirms that there are other students for whom a further special class has been recommended, and it is suggested that it should be located at Taperoo High School or LeFevre High School. Accommodation at both these schools is at present fully used, and it would not be possible to make available accommodation at either of them for an additional special class. However, it is hoped that arrangements can be made for the required accommodation for 1976. In the meantime, officers of the Guidance and Special Education Branch of the Education Department will co-operate with the principals of the schools in which the additional students are enrolled now in order to provide appropriate programmes and resources for them.

VALE PARK INTERSECTION

In reply to Mr. SLATER (February 26).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Plans are being prepared for the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Ascot Avenue and Harris Road, Vale Park, and land acquisition for roadworks associated with the project is in hand. The signals will be installed on completion of negotiations for the necessary land, and the scheduling of work in priority with other locations requiring similar treatment. It is expected that the work will be carried out late in the financial year 1975-76.

M.V. *TROUBRIDGE*

In reply to Mr. CHAPMAN (February 26).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The increased cost of subsidising the m.v. *Troubridge* operations demands that maximum financial returns be obtained from available cargo and passenger traffic. It is considered that there is no adequate reason for varying the previous decision not to grant concessions for the transport of horses to race meetings on Kangaroo Island, especially when it is borne in mind that a concession for carriage of race horses to Kangaroo Island race meetings would also create anomalies with arrangements for other sporting bodies.

HANCOCK ROAD

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (February 26).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Funds provided by the Australian Government for urban arterial roads did not provide for work on Hancock Road to continue. The Australian Government has promised further funds for road purposes in 1974-75, and an application has been made for work on Hancock Road to be financed from these additional funds. If the application is successful, it should be possible to finalise construction of the incompleted work on Hancock Road.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Dr. EASTICK: Will the Premier say what degree of equity the Government intends that it should hold in the Toyota or Nissan enterprise in the South Australian motor vehicle industry and how the Government intends to involve itself through its financial participation in the operation of the company? Yesterday, in reply to a question, the Premier said that one of the matters discussed with officials of the Toyota company on Monday was the injection of South Australian Government funds into any development. I should like the Premier to enlarge on that statement, saying just how much equity he intends that the Government should hold in the project, how much it would cost, and what percentage of the total involvement it would represent. Is the Premier seeking to ensure overriding Australian control? In addition, how would he use the influence the Government would hold? Would he want positions on the board for Government representatives, and would he insist on worker participation as a basic requirement of any development?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is not a condition of Government assistance to the Toyota company or any other company coming to South Australia that South Australian Government equity be taken in a project. What has been made clear to the Toyota company (and what is made clear to any other company seeking the possibility of establishing here) is that Government equity may well be available, and that we are willing to discuss it. The matter of board membership by the Government or the Industries Assistance Corporation (which would be the Government vehicle for the taking of any equity in an industry in South Australia) would be a matter for negotiation. No conditions have been laid down, nor has a price at this stage been referred to in any way; the matter is open for discussion. Regarding worker participation, no special provision will be made for newly establishing industries: the proposals for worker participation will apply to all industries in South Australia.

MONARTO

Mr. KENEALLY: Does the Minister of Development and Mines agree with the criticism made by the Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Social Services (Mr. Yates) of a report prepared by the Monarto Development Commission on Social Planning Methodology, particularly

the contention of Mr. Yates that members of the public are not being given the opportunity to participate in planning for the new city? As this criticism appears in today's newspaper, I should appreciate the Minister's comments.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: It is interesting that the two criticisms highlighted in the newspaper article do not really relate to the content of the report of the commission or the report issued in criticism of it. I refer, of course, to public participation in the planning process and to the Government's judgment about the point at which local government, in the conventional sense, should be instituted at Monarto. Members would be aware that the Act provides that, at any time up to a population of about 60 000 people, this process can take place. I understand that Mr. Yates is advocating a population of 10 000 people. It may happen at that point, but the Act simply establishes a ceiling above which the present local government arrangements for the development area cannot continue.

It is interesting to note that there was no documented criticism in the *Advertiser*, except of the broadest type, about the contention of the report itself. All I can do really is address myself to the criticism about the lack of public involvement in the planning process. It is interesting to note also that the document being criticised by Mr. Yates was issued as part of the continuing process of public participation in Monarto. That document was issued in order to try to involve the public in the whole planning process. I remind members that, at the beginning of this project, no large population on the ground at Monarto could be involved in this process, whereas, with the Noarlunga regional centre, people lived in the area and would be affected by the development. We do, of course, have the various staffs of the three Government departments that will be relocated at Monarto. The commission has made every effort to try to involve these people in continuing discussions on the sort of city that Monarto will be.

In addition, much printed material is being made available to the public. In fact, 25 000 information kits have been distributed over the past year, and hundreds of people have taken the opportunity to complete an enclosed questionnaire, giving their views on what they would like to see at Monarto. About 2 000 people have visited the exhibition at the commission's office, on Unley Road, since it opened in December last year. Officers from all levels of the commission have addressed about 200 organisations, and audiences have ranged from laymen to professionals. This is a completely open process and, if the public is unwilling to involve itself more fully than it has done in the past, the commission can hardly be blamed for that lack of involvement. As every effort has been made to involve the public, one wonders about the motives behind a public statement such as this, when Mr. Yates's people have had every opportunity of taking up their criticism with the commission. In conclusion, I draw members' attention to the following statement contained in the report referred to which may not be unrelated to the sorts of tactic that has been adopted on this occasion:

> We recommend that funds be made available immediately to voluntary agencies, self-help groups, recreational bodies and service organisations to stimulate their involvement in the Monarto planning process.

WORKER PARTICIPATION

Mr. COUMBE: Will the Minister of Labour and Industry outline the present position in South Australia regarding the concept of worker participation? Does the Minister recall that last year an officer of his department studied this subject overseas? When that officer returned to Australia, he issued a report that caused considerable controversy in certain circles. Can the Minister now say whether the Government has accepted the recommendations in that report and, if it has not, what action, if any, will be taken regarding worker participation in South Australia?

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: No doubt the honourable member received a copy of that report. I am sure that, on reading it, he would have discovered that the report simply refers to matters that were studied by two officers when they were overseas. No recommendations were made in the report: it was merely a report on the visit by those officers to various countries where this operation is in progress. For that reason, nothing was contained in the report concerning the Government. Naturally, the Government has considered the report as it relates to the observations made by the officers during their visit, but it has not considered it on the basis of adopting any measures. At this stage, various projects are in their initial stages, one project involving the Housing Trust, and another the Royal Adelaide Hospital, as well as other projects involving various organisations in the metropolitan area, and we expect to implement those projects soon. We are also to receive a report from the trade union movement. We are studying the report of the officers who travelled overseas, and we are examining other information that we have received from overseas. Until we have considered these matters fully, we will not be in a position—

Mr. Coumbe: Is the report gathering dust?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: No; we are well advanced with the project, especially as it relates to the Housing Trust, and within a few weeks we shall be able to make an announcement on this project.

GARDEN SUBURB

Mr. PAYNE: Can the Minister of Local Government say when the proclamation for the amalgamation of Colonel Light Gardens and Mitcham will be issued?

Mr. Gunn: A Dorothy Dixer!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PAYNE: No, it is not. It happens to be an issue of some importance to the residents of that part of Colonel Light Gardens which is situated in my district. The member for Mitcham also has the honour of representing some of the people living in Colonel Light Gardens. I have been approached recently by residents in my part of Colonel Light Gardens, if I may be so proprietary, who have expressed some doubt about recent developments concerning local government boundaries.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: There is provision under the Garden Suburb Act for a proclamation to be issued. The proclamation has been prepared but it has not been issued, pending finalising of the planning regulations. It was considered absolutely necessary to preserve the residential nature of Colonel Light Gardens. Until the regulations are approved, no guarantee can be obtained, and for that reason the proclamation has been delayed. I have reason to believe, hopefully, that next week the matter can be dealt with and, if it is, the proclamation will then be issued.

RAILWAY TAKE-OVER

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Can the Premier say whether the intended take-over of the South Australian Railways by the Commonwealth Government was discussed during the visit he and the Minister of Transport made to Canberra last Thursday, when they had discussions with the Prime Minister and other Commonwealth Ministers? In addition, was the future of the Islington railway yards discussed?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes, the matter was discussed with the Prime Minister. The future of the Islington workshops will, in any arrangements with the Commonwealth Government, be assured.

WHEAT SALES

Mr GUNN: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Agriculture to raise at the next meeting of Agricultural Council the decision of the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture (Senator Wriedt) to allow the trade union movement to ban sales of wheat to Chile? South Australian wheatgrowers are concerned at the decision of the Commonwealth Minister to bow to union blackmail that involves determining Australian foreign policy on the wharf. This could affect the future viability and livelihood of many wheatgrowers in this country who are dependent to some degree on all wheat markets. As Australia sells wheat to many countries in the world under regressive regimes, besides Chile, will the Minister ask his collegaue to examine this matter?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes.

SWANPORT BRIDGE

Mr. WARDLE: Will the Minister of Transport say when it is expected that the new road bridge over the Murray River at Swanport will be completed? Also, will he say what the bridge will cost and whether it is expected that the freeway will be completed to the bridge approaches when the bridge itself is completed?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The planning provides that the bridge and the freeway will be opened simultaneously, hopefully in about three years time.

FISHERIES RESEARCH

Mr. RODDA: Will the Minister of Fisheries say what action his department is taking to research and explore the diversity of fishing to replace the losses being occasioned by the prohibition of the sale of shark as an edible fish? Several fishermen have expressed to me concern at their plight resulting from the rules relating to shark fishing. These people have expressed appreciation of what the Minister has tried to do, but I understand that some sections of the fishing industry have asked that a research vessel be provided to examine in detail the other areas of fishing which manufacturers and such people could develop and which would assure the continuation of the considerable progress made in the fishing industry in recent years. There is much concern in this important industry, and I should like the Minister to say what action his department is taking in this matter.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The matter has been generally under consideration for some time. We appreciate that the development of any new fishing resource is in the interests of the State's fishing industry generally. The honourable member would know that, in the past few years, we have undertaken substantial squid research work to ascertain the possibilities of developing that industry in order to supply the large markets available in Asian countries for that species of fish. Regarding fresh-water species, we have been examining the position involving yabbies, and much work is being done following the recent appointment of a fisheries research officer in that field. That work has been done together with the other river fisheries work. However, the situation is difficult because, if fishing potential has been sufficient, the fishermen skilled in the area concerned have generally exploited that resource. This does not mean to say that no additional fishing resources can be opened up. Constant research is being undertaken, and two weeks ago a conference of Directors of Fisheries canvassed this matter. We are trying to draw up an Australia-wide programme for additional research in this field.

Mr. BLACKER: Can the Premier say whether any further developments have taken place in negotiations between the South Australian Government and the Australian Government concerning the mercury content limitation in fish, as proposed by the Commonwealth Minister for Science (Mr. Morrison)? I understand that last week the Premier discussed this matter with the Prime Minister, expressing the State's opposition to this proposal. The suggested limitation of 0·5 parts a million has created considerable concern amongst fishermen. Already fish merchants have been reluctant to purchase fish that might prove later to contain more than the suggested limit of mercury. As fishermen, merchants, and consumers are all in a state of uncertainty about the matter, can the Premier say what are the latest developments?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Last Thursday, I discussed the matter in some detail with the Prime Minister, who has promised to investigate it further, taking it back to the Commonwealth Cabinet. That is where the matter stands at present.

KULPARA INTERSECTION

Mr. BOUNDY: Will the Minister of Transport investigate the provision of "stop" signs on the Arthurton-Bute road at its intersection with the Kadina to Port Wakefield road in the township of Kulpara? This intersection is on the crest of a hill, in about the centre of Kulpara, and long-distance visibility along the main Kadina road is difficult to obtain from the side roads. The local rural school is on one corner of the intersection and "school" signs, as well as "slow down" signs, have been provided. However, these seem to be ignored and many near misses have occurred over the years, especially in recent months. Local residents and the district council consider that the provision of "stop" signs is essential in the interests of road safety.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I noted that the honourable member, in his explanation, stated that the district council considered that the provision of "stop" signs was essential. I assume from that that the council has taken the action required of it in regard to preparing the necessary information for consideration by the Road Traffic Board. Apparently the honourable member is not certain whether that has been done.

Mr. Boundy: It has in the past.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will refer the matter to the Road Traffic Board to find out whether the council has honoured its obligation and, if it has, what action has followed.

PUMPING STATIONS

Mr. ARNOLD: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Irrigation whether the Government has reconsidered its decision not to incorporate in-line screens in the rising mains on new pumping installations in the Riverland? Other growers in the Riverland and I consider it essential that in-line screens be provided at pumping stations because of the problems created by small fish and shellfish being pumped through the lines to growers' properties. If in-line screening is carried out at the pumping stations and growers have a secondary screening of finer mesh on their properties, most of the problems can be solved. The Golden Heights Irrigation Authority, which has been operating for several years, has been able to screen the water at the pumping station, without serious problems. However, the Renmark Irrigation Trust, which has a new installation, has had much difficulty in the past

few months in regard to fish going through the pumping station and being trapped in the meters and in-line screens on properties. The fish are too big to be handled through the screening facilities. We have the Chaffey pumping station, the Waikerie redistribution system at present being constructed, and then Berri and Barmera, and I ask that the Government reconsider its decision not to screen and that it provide in the plans for in-line screens to be fitted. I consider that that can be done at reasonable cost. Automatic screens can be installed, involving no maintenance costs.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: As I do not know of the matter the honourable member has raised, I will confer with my colleague to find out whether a decision of the kind to which he has referred has been made. The honourable member has spoken as though it has, but I do not know whether it has. I also will bring to my colleague's notice the points that the honourable member has raised in support of installing these screens.

BUS PASSES

Mrs. BYRNE: Can the Minister of Transport say whether the Municipal Tramways Trust intends to sell bus passes at the regional depots to be established and upgraded by the trust, as announced by the Minister on March 8? If that is not intended, will the Minister consider the matter? In his statement, the Minister said that the depot at St. Agnes that was recently acquired from the private operator would be upgraded. My inquiries have revealed that it is to be increased in size. The sale of bus passes would be a convenient service to the public. In the past, it was not possible to provide such a service at the St. Agnes depot, which was too small. However, requests have been made to me for this local service to be provided. I realise that if a service is provided at this depot it will have to be provided at all other regional depots as well.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As it is expected that full facilities will be available at all depots to be established by the trust, the passes to which the honourable member refers will certainly be available with all the other facilities. I hope that one day we shall be able again to have school concession passes on sale at the schools.

NEW RESIDENCE TORNADO

Mr. NANKIVELL: Can the Premier, representing the Minister of Lands, say whether a report has yet been received from the Lands Department and the Agriculture Department setting out in detail the estimated tornado damage at New Residence and the effect this is expected to have on the current and forthcoming incomes of people involved? If it has, will the Government consider some of the matters I have raised during a recent grievance debate with regard to assisting financially those people whose incomes will be affected, so they will be able to pay their way in the forthcoming season?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Although I do not know whether that information has been received in the departments, I know that there is movement in a number of departments relating to New Residence. I will get a full report for the honourable member.

PETRO-CHEMICAL PLANT

Mr. BECKER: Has the Premier asked the Commonwealth member for Adelaide (Mr. Hurford) to approach the Commonwealth Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr. Connor) about altering the conditions relating to the Redcliff petro-chemical project? An article in the Melbourne *Age* of March 11, headed "Fight to save Redcliff: Hurford hits Connor", states:

The Chairman of the Federal Caucus Economic Committee (Mr. Hurford) has begun a last-ditch effort to rescue the Redcliff project.

Mr. Hurford strongly criticises two of Mr. Connor's policies. The report states:

The policies are: that substantial quantities of natural gas liquids must be converted at Redcliff into petrol; and that none of the gas liquids shall be exported.

Referring to Mr. Hurford, the report also states:

He also attacked the S.A. Government for transferring the project from the enthusiastic Dow consortium to the I.C.I. group, which had less incentives to get the project on stream . . . Mr. Hurford said that, if the Government policies were the major hurdle for Redcliff, he would take the matter up with Mr. Connor and with the Party.

In view of the reported comments, can the Premier say whether Mr. Hurford has the authority of the Government to intervene in this matter? Could his interference jeopardise South Australia's opportunity to obtain a valuable industry, with associated industrial development?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Mr. Hurford does not speak for the South Australian Government; our negotiations have been directly with the consortium and the Commonwealth Minister.

Dr. Eastick: Then he was just intruding?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I do not believe that the expression of interest in this project by any member of Parliament, if he is making what he believes to be a constructive suggestion, is in any way an intrusion. I believe that this whole project is a matter of public moment. I welcome what are suggestions from people about the way in which it might conceivably proceed. What I do not welcome is the kind of thing we have experienced in this State, where the criticisms offered are purely destructive and opportunist.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Mr. Hurford does not speak for the South Australian Government. We support the Commonwealth Minister's view that it is of national importance that we should provide for conversion to gasoline, if that can be done. We are proceeding with negotiations with the Imperial Chemical Industries consortium. All parties concerned having expressed the view that it is possible to achieve a viable project at Redcliff, the necessary studies are proceeding. I do not think that at this stage I can take the matter further than that. If Mr. Hurford is able to induce the Commonwealth Minister to take a different view about some of the matters that the Commonwealth Government has laid down, that is between the Commonwealth Minister and him.

Dr. Eastick: Then you're—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: For our part, we are proceeding within the parameters that have previously been established.

NUDE BATHING

Mr. MATHWIN: Can the Premier say whether police officers have been instructed by the Government to ignore instances of nude bathing at metropolitan beaches? I have been informed that, on March 5, a lady and a gentleman took their grandchildren to Glenelg beach, where they saw a male and female bathing nude. The lady and the gentleman, having complained to nearby police officers that the nude bathers were embarrassing them and the young children,

asked the officers to do something about the matter. The officers asked them whether they wished to lodge a complaint, as the police could do nothing until a complaint had been lodged.

When the officers asked the lady and the gentleman whether they had been inconvenienced or upset by the nude bathers, this couple said that they and their grandchildren had been embarrassed and upset. As I understand the law, the nude bathers could have been charged with indecent exposure, so it seems to me that the police officers could have acted of their own volition. Have police officers been instructed not to take action in relation to nude bathing at metropolitan beaches?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, they have not been so instructed.

EDUCATION RESEARCH

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Can the Minister of Education say what are the duties of the research officer in the Education Department? Will there be any duplication of the activities of this officer and those of the new research and planning council, whose establishment we recently debated in this House? It was announced in the press about a week ago that Dr. Tillett had been appointed research officer in the Education Department, which is divorced from the activities of the new council. I was under the impression that the operations of the council would take over the research activities of the Education Department. I therefore ask whether there will be any duplication of activities.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Any possibility of duplication will be avoided to the greatest extent possible. In broad terms, the division of responsibility in respect of educational research that affects primary and secondary education is that research officers in the Planning and Research Branch of the department will be concerned with the short-term and immediate problems that arise as a consequence of the day-to-day administration of the department. In addition, they will be involved in projects where the research that is undertaken is fairly closely related to the immediate day-to-day problems that face us in educational administration. For example, the immediate and short-term planning of new schools will be fairly well confined to the Education Deparment, because the decisions that have to be made are of an immediate or short-term nature. Where we are concerned with the overall planning of educational facilities in a place such as Monarto, where the process can be investigated more thoroughly and where the type of educational institution can be questioned and considered thoroughly, that sort of research, which is more long-term in nature, will be carried out by officers of the council.

Broadly speaking, therefore, pure research, long-term research, and other research problems will be the province of the council. To some extent also there will be an *ad hoc* arrangement that will affect the council's activities, depending on how much research money is made available from sources outside the council. Already this financial year the council expects an income of about $65 000, which will be used to employ people in one way or another. Other aspects that are associated with any research and planning branch or associated with the council relate to the need for statistical information. The main statistical services will be retained within the Education Department Research and Planning Branch, so the council will not be involved directly in the provision of basic statistical services for the Education Department. I hope that, broadly speaking, explains the division of responsibility. Dr. Tillett, who is Director of Research and Planning in the department, would be more heavily involved in the overall day-to-day problems of educational administration than would be Mr. Anders or the Educational Planning and Research Council.

HANGING

Mr. WRIGHT: Is the Attorney-General aware that Mr. Hamer (Liberal Premier of Victoria) has announced that he will personally introduce legislation to abolish capital punishment in Victoria? In addition, does the Attorney now consider that the climate is appropriate to again introduce a measure to abolish capital punishment in South Australia? Last week, in a press statement credited to Mr. Hamer it was indicated that he intended to take such action in the Victorian Parliament. This morning on the *A.M.* radio programme, a voice recording of Mr. Hamer notified the public of Victoria that he intended soon to introduce legislation to this effect on a free vote. In the light of Mr. Hamer's announcement does the Attorney consider that circumstances have changed sufficiently in South Australia so that the Government will get better co-operation from members on this question?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I read with great interest the statement made by the Premier of Victoria, a gentleman who is much admired, I understand, by members opposite. He intends to introduce a Bill to abolish capital punishment in Victoria. I welcome the accession, to the ranks of those who are opposed to capital punishment, of the Liberal Leader in Victoria and so many of his followers who are willing to follow him on this matter. It encourages the view that many of us hold: that we have seen the last execution in Australia. However, I must admit to a feeling of some dismay when I read the other day a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that, if there were an Eastick Government, executions would be resumed in South Australia.

Dr. Eastick: I didn't say that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Goldsworthy: You'll have to do better than that on the High Court.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. L. J. KING: The report I read stated that the Leader, if Premier of this State, would treat each case on its merits. I therefore assume that, if the merits indicated in his view the need for an execution, there would be an execution. If that does not mean that executions would be resumed, I do not know what it means. I believe it is of the utmost importance that capital punishment disappear from the Statute Book of South Australia. If I believed there was any reasonable prospect of such a Bill being passed through both Houses of this Parliament, I would recommend to Cabinet that it be introduced at once.

Whenever this Government has tried to abolish capital punishment in South Australia, the Bill has been opposed by most members opposite and has been rejected by their colleagues in another place, and I do not have any inclination that leads me to think that the result would be any different now. However, I hope very much that, if the move planned by the Victorian Premier materialises and succeeds, it will be a sufficient influence on his Party colleagues in this State to ensure that a future Bill introduced by this Government will be successful.

MOUNT BARKER BRIDGE

Mr. McANANEY: Can the Minister of Transport say when the bridge over the freeway at Mount Barker will be opened and when it is expected that the bitumen road between Strathalbyn and Wistow will be completed?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will get the information for the honourable member.

INTAKES AND STORAGES

Mr. LANGLEY: Can the Minister of Works say what are the present holdings of South Australia's reservoirs and whether that water supply is satisfactory compared to the supply at this time last year?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I am pleased to note the continuing interest of the member for Unley in the holdings of metropolitan reservoirs: it is a subject he has raised constantly. It so happens that I have information regarding the present holdings of the reservoirs, and I should be pleased to give that information. Total capacity and present storages are as follows:

	Total capacity Ml	Present storage Ml
Mount Bold	47 300	19 173
Happy Valley	12 700	11 205
Clarendon Weir	320	311
Myponga	26 800	17 454
Millbrook	16 500	9 251
Kangaroo Creek	24 400	5 325
Hope Valley	3 470	2 834
Thorndon Park	640	496
Barossa	4 510	3 897
South Para	51 300	37 868
Mannum	220	166
Murray Bridge	520	282
	188 680	108 262

The total water supply is reasonable at this stage but, as we have had a very dry two-month period, more rain soon would help. I assure the member for Unley and all other members that we are holding our own at present.

PRESS SECRETARIES

Mr. EVANS: Can the Premier say whether Ministers' press secretaries are allowed to have two or more jobs, and has Mr. Bruce Muirden Government approval to write articles in *Nation Review* and lecture at Workers' Educational Association courses? This position has been brought to my attention because Mr. Muirden writes for *Nation Review*, and at one time was the South Australian correspondent for that newspaper, while also being press secretary to a Minister. He is now press secretary to the Minister of Environment and Conservation. Last Sunday's weekend newspaper contains the following advertisement:

> Bruce Muirden takes the lid off the Media . . . This well-known journalist and press secretary shows you how to search behind the news in a new W.E.A. course.

Readers of *Nation Review* know that a very strong bias against the Liberal Party or the right of centre politics is shown by this writer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is commenting, and that is not allowed.

Mr. EVANS: The Australian Journalists Association has an ethics committee, and I have had put to me by a journalist that he believes it is unethical for a person employed at the expense of the people of the State to serve a Minister and to expand his activities by serving a political organisation. The person who approached me was concerned that Mr. Muirden's lecturing was wrong in principle and a dangerous practice for the future regardless of which Party might be in Government. It is an accepted practice that public servants and Government employees have only one job. Press secretaries are paid about $12 000 a year (with perquisites) and I raise this matter so that the Premier may explain whether these people are allowed to take on more than one job, use their position for any purpose they may wish as individuals and, at the same time, use information they have obtained whilst employed in Government departments. Finally, when I started to ask this question the same person was present in the press gallery.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Public servants are allowed to hold other positions when they have specific permission.

Mr. Becker: Those in the Lands Titles Office didn't go so well!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Where they do not have specific permission, they do not hold other positions without breaching the Public Service Act. However, that Act does not apply to Ministerial staff.

Mr. Mathwin: What about the one man one job theme?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I understood that the objection taken to any activities of Mr. Muirden in writing articles for newspapers or in giving lectures at the W.E.A. was that the articles were biased against the Liberal Party. Press secretaries are allowed to engage in other journalistic activities, so long as their Ministers approve. Therefore, the question whether Mr. Muirden has approval to write for *Nation Review* or for some other newspaper should be decided by his Minister. As to his time spent at the W.E.A., that is outside his working time. I would not object to any Ministerial employee of mine lecturing at the W.E.A.

Mr. Mathwin: But wouldn't you—

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Glenelg.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am sure that the Minister would not object to one of his employees lecturing at the W.E.A. Indeed, I commend those lectures to Opposition members, because I think that they have a lot to learn. In fact, the lectures are given outside the time that the employee must serve in his public employment and, consequently, such a service is not paid for by the public. Presumably, it is paid for by the people who enrol in the class, and I hope that he has a jolly good enrolment.

BUS AUCTIONS

Mr. RUSSACK: Will the Minister of Works consider disposing of surplus Education Department buses by public auction instead of by the tender-call method, in order to give private country school bus operators a better chance to purchase these buses? I refer to a letter, admittedly 18 months old, but I think the same conditions apply now. In part, the letter, which originated from the Education Department, states:

> The method of disposal of surplus Government equipment is the prerogative of the State Supply Department. This department may sell our buses by tender call or by public auction or any other means they consider satisfactory.

I have been approached by a private bus operator who has apparently tendered unsuccessfully several times. He considers that the Education Department buses still have a good life and could be used for his purpose at the point of disposal. He says that the condition of the buses would assist not only the buyer but would also help the safe transport of students to schools. Because of his unsuccessful attempts to purchase and the fact that, at a public auction, if his price is not high enough he has the chance to increase the offer, I ask the Minister to consider my request.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to refer the matter to the Supply and Tender Board, which oversees the activities of the State Supply Department. The honourable member would appreciate that disposal of surplus Government equipment must be supervised strictly and must be on the basis that the Government obtains the best possible return for the goods sold. The honourable member seems to point to the need for bus operators

carrying schoolchildren in country areas to be given a specific privilege in this matter. It is up to the board to decide whether to put the vehicles to tender or auction. The honourable member has suggested that public auction would be a far more suitable method of disposal so that would-be purchasers could increase their prices if they wanted to at the time of the sale. This could result in a better return to the Government and I shall be happy to investigate the suggestion and bring down a report from the board to see whether or not it is acceptable.

WATER RATES

Mr. SIMMONS: Will the Minister of Works consider the adoption of a scheme whereby water rates accounts that are sent out quarterly could be delivered by hand, as is the case with Electricity Trust accounts and, I believe, Gas Company accounts? Shortly after publication of a news item in the *Advertiser* concerning the report by the Public Accounts Committee on the Engineering and Water Supply Department depots, a member of the public (who I believe is a former member of the Engineering and Water Supply Department) suggested to me that it would be a good idea to send out one annual notice for water rates each year with quarterly coupons, because the amount is the same each quarter and this would save 30c a year postage on each account. I thanked him for the suggestion and told him I would pass it on, but there were some problems associated with it. Another practical idea that would save money would be to deliver notices by hand because they could be presorted and they could be delivered this way more cheaply than the cost of postage.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The idea had not occurred to me and I do not think the suggestion has been made to the department before. I was unaware that the Electricity Trust delivered accounts by hand and I take it this occurs only in the metropolitan area; I am certain it does not occur in the country. As the suggestion certainly has merit, I shall be happy to refer the matter to the Engineering and Water Supply Department for consideration and ask it to bring down a report.

ABATTOIR PRICES

Mr. VENNING: Will the Minister of Works consult with the Minister of Agriculture concerning the depressed and irregular prices at the Gepps Cross abattoir saleyards since the South Australian Meat Corporation took over the operation with its taboo on the many small operators operating at the abattoir? Since Samcor took over the abattoir there have been several changes, one of which is that, unless a butcher's business is of a certain size, he is not permitted to operate there. Consequently, from that time the prices at our abattoir have been irregular and very low. The abattoir is the yardstick for values throughout the State and it is very important that it should be given an open go to create the right price for stock at any time of the year. Will the Minister ask his colleague to see how this change has affected the primary producer, particularly in relation to irregular and depressed prices?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I hope the honourable member is not suggesting that this move alone is the cause of the depressed prices.

Mr. Venning: No.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to ask my colleague to examine the question and I will get a report for the honourable member.

MINING REHABILITATION

Mr. MAX BROWN: Will the Minister of Development and Mines say whether there is any rehabilitation programme arranged by his department for the Mount Laura quarries near Whyalla? If so, when will it be started? As I understand that the leases have been worked and that the quarries are to be shifted soon, I wonder whether this programme of rehabilitation is to be carried out by the department.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Under the Mines and Works Inspection Act a person taking out a new tenement for surface mining operations must lodge a rehabilitation programme with the State mining engineer. The actual rehabilitation programme is carried out by the company, the holder of the tenement, rather than by the department itself. The responsibility of the State mining engineer is to ensure that the rehabilitation programme lodged by the holder of the tenement meets our standards. The only alternative to that type of arrangement would be where there is a hole in the ground or some other pollution problem arising from a tenement that was taken out prior to the passing of the Act. In that case the Mines Department might well take upon itself to undertake certain rehabilitation. I will get a more detailed report for the honourable member.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The SPEAKER: I notice in the gallery a distinguished visitor, in the person of Lord O'Neill of the Maine, P.C. Lord O'Neill, who is accompanied by his family, is a member of the House of Lords, and former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. Knowing that it is the unanimous wish of the House that I do so, I invite His Lordship to take a seat on the floor of the House, and I ask the honourable Premier and the honourable Leader of the Opposition to conduct our distinguished visitor to the Chair and introduce him.

The Hon. Lord O'Neill was escorted by the Hon. D. A. Dunstan and Dr. Eastick to a seat on the floor of the House.

WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (BOARD)

Second reading.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Bill

Members will no doubt recall that the principal Act, the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, 1974, was enacted shortly before the Christmas adjournment of this House. This Act was, as was indicated at the time, based on a model uniform Bill prepared by the Parliamentary Counsel of the Commonwealth. This course was adopted so as to secure a high degree of uniformity as between the State Statutes, which support the Commonwealth law that continued the Australian Wheat Board in operation.

Since the principal Act was enacted, the Australian Wheat Board has indicated to the Government that there seems to be a need for certain modifications to the measure in the light of specific circumstances of its activities in this State. In fact, these modifications in terms appeared in the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, 1968, a measure substantially the same as the principal Act but which

related to the activities of the board during the period 1968 to 1974. The Government accepts the contention of the Australian Wheat Board and this Bill is accordingly placed before this House.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 differs somewhat from the ordinary commencement provision, and is intended to ensure that the Act presaged by this Bill shall be deemed to have come into operation on the day that the principal Act came into operation or was deemed to have come into operation. Members will recall that the coming into operation of the principal Act was expressed to coincide with the coming into operation of the Commonwealth Act continuing the Australian Wheat Board in operation.

Clause 3 amends section 15 of the principal Act, first, by substituting for the present subsection (4), which refers to "registered crop liens", a subsection in similar form that makes reference to "registered bills of sale", since registered crop liens are not a feature of the law of this State. Secondly, three new subsections, namely (6), (7), and (8) are intended to be inserted that provide for the deduction of charges payable to the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited for storage and handling of wheat. As has been indicated, both of the amendments intended by clause 3 are, in terms, the same as provisions that existed in the 1968 wheat industry stabilisation legislation.

Mr. VENNING secured the adjournment of the debate.

SHEARERS ACCOMMODATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 26. Page 2578.)

Mr. CHAPMAN (Alexandra): I agree with the statement made by the Minister of Labour and Industry last week that the present Shearers Accommodation Act is so cumbersome and unwieldy that it is difficult to follow: because of its many amendments it resembles a patchwork quilt. The Act is long overdue for revision. I declare my support for the repeal of the Shearers Accommodation Act, the amendments to that Act, and the regulations covering the period from 1922 to 1967. Accordingly I support the principle of introducing new shearers accommodation legislation and the appropriate regulations as soon as possible. In supporting that principle, I see an obligation on the employee to respect the accommodation to be built as of equal importance as that of the obligation on the employer to provide such premises. Shearing employees have worn the brand of "greasies", "itinerants" and "drifters" for many years but I believe these men are a vital link in Australia's golden industry. They deserve better accommodation and better living and working conditions generally than they have at present, in keeping with the importance of their industrial role. I do not think that any member of this Parliament would deny these men a fair go in this regard but, as I have said, by legislating for their requirements the responsibility cuts both ways. It is the old story of a few bad ones destroying things for the mass, and there is no doubt that a few "roughies" have brought a bad name into the industry. I have known good, sound premises to be provided but to be wrecked by drunken shearers who ought to have been flogged for their behaviour.

Mr. Wright: I thought you were going too well.

Mr. CHAPMAN: Therefore, at the appropriate time I will seek to have adequate protection for employers' investment embodied in the legislation. It is also necessary to bring before the House the deplorable conditions that have existed and, for the benefit of the member for Adelaide, I say that they still exist in some outback areas. Some employers have expected their men to work like niggers and live like iguanas. I know this to be so because I have been required to shear on the corners of paddocks, on a bag or a piece of masonite. Of my own volition, I have slept on woolpacks in the woolshed and I have eaten outside the mess provided simply because it was more convenient and more comfortable to do so.

I do not deny that some conditions that have applied (and they still apply in some isolated places) in South Australia have for a long time needed to be improved. Wool harvesting is a big operation and, even though the men employed in that work are paid a high wage, they are entitled to a reasonable standard of living, and with this in mind I will try to mention all aspects of the legislation.

I refer now to a well prepared report in the *Stock Journal* of February 21, 1974, dealing with the shearing industry in particular. I think the report is a clear recognition of the requirement to upgrade accommodation and other parts of the industry. The report begins by recognising the need for shearing skills and states that we ought to be encouraging those persons who have accepted the smell of the industry and have decided to make shearing their profession. The report states that we should set out to train them properly and tell them the benefits that can be derived from being employed in that field. After dealing with shearing skills, the report states:

> However, I do not believe that effort in this direction alone is ever going to overcome the acute shortages of skilled men and restore the continuity of shearer supply. Frankly, there are too many attractive city and near metropolitan positions available to the labour force to expect sound men to leave their homes and families for employment in the outback. The inducement to do so must be prompty but carefully upgraded.

In the metropolitan area there are too many attractions, including attractive jobs, to allow a reasonable flow of young men into the shearing industry. These young men are not willing to leave their family and go to the outback unless the conditions there are similar to those that they have enjoyed at home, or are at least clean and reasonable. It is only proper that shearers' accommodation legislation should be introduced to cover these requirements. The report also states:

> A shearer's effective working life is probably limited to a shorter span than that of most manual labourers. Of necessity he must work in a bent over fashion, at some periods carrying the whole of his own weight and part of that of the sheep while in most awkward positions. Physically his body is under strain. A form of mental strain accompanies this job also.

Probably, the most difficult form of worry experienced by the married shearer is that caused by his being separated from his family for most of the year. I am sensitive to this aspect because, having been a shearer and having been separated because of the very nature of the job, I know the effect and the nervous strain that accompanies the job. The report also states:

> He is locked away on the job, with little chance of regular contact, leave alone the opportunity of being with his dependants during periods of distress or sickness. It is appreciated that there are component payments built into the Shearers Award, designed to compensate for his travelling and living away from home.

Whilst shearers are compensated for the disability of living away from home, it is only reasonable that the accommodation on the job be brought up to a reasonable standard. Therefore, I have no hesitation in supporting the principle of upgrading the shearers' accommodation legislation generally.

Turning now to the provisions of the Bill, clauses 1 to 5 are formal and acceptable as part of the machinery of the Bill. Clause 6 limits the applicability of the Bill to the situation where there is no alternative accommodation available and where four or more men are accommodated at the same time. Nothing in that clause is objectionable.

In fact, it is in line with amendments to the Shearers Accommodation Act that were made in 1967. I also agree with the power given to the Minister to dispense with the requirements of this legislation in certain circumstances, such as where flood, drought, fire, or other disaster beyond the control of man has occurred. I am sure we all appreciate that. In these conditions, make-shift arrangements at a station or farm outpost must be condoned.

The provision will allow the Minister to receive an application, consider such unusual or unforeseen circumstances, and dispense with the requirements of the legislation accordingly. I should like it noted that already an inbuilt part of the Pastoral Award provides for financial reimbursement to the shearing industry employee when he is camping away from home. It is dealt with under the heading "Shearer and shed hand" as camping allowance. As a component part of the $45 paid to the shearer for each 100 sheep shorn, a camping allowance of $1·1 is paid to offset the disability.

I do not think that the Minister, by including in the Bill the provision he has included, will be setting any precedent. It will merely be a recognition that, in circumstances beyond the control of the property owner, the Minister may dispense with the requirements in respect of shearers' accommodation and conditions. Sometimes stock are too poor to be brought to the homestead on a property. There are occasions when it is convenient at the waterhole points to set up a temporary shed, not so much for major shearing operations but to do crutching or attend to a sheep during fly-strike phases. All in all, that provision in the Bill is valuable and important. I believe that common sense has prevailed in the past in this regard and will apply in the future, if we can escape the interference of cranky union leaders or those who might not understand the situation, not having had personal experience. However, we are always subjected to that sort of corruption. In ordinary circumstances, the union officials are reasonable, several of them having had personal experience in this field.

Clause 7 deals with the appointment of inspectors, including certain police officers. The first appointment of a shearers' accommodation inspector was made on April 4, 1972, when Mr. Ken Heindrich was appointed. He was engaged to report to the Labour and Industry Department on the condition of shearer accommodation throughout South Australia. His 1973 report gave details of 335 visits to sheep properties, with 159 first inspections, 129 follow-up inspections, and 51 miscellaneous inquiries. Inspections were made in the Mid North, Far North, North-West, Far North-West, Upper North, North-East, east of Burra, Upper South-East, Lower South-East, and Kangaroo Island. It is not so pleasing to see that satisfactory accommodation was found on only 78 properties, whereas unsatisfactory accommodation, according to the provisions of the Act, was discovered on 206 properties. The 1973 report refers to 44 major breaches of the Act. Written orders were issued on these offenders. I am proud to report an incredible response by these woolgrowers, with no convictions at all arising from the 1973 inspections.

Mr. Heindrich's 1974 report has just come to hand. The details of that report show similar satisfaction reflected in the year's work. A total of 353 properties were visited and inspected, comprising 77 new inspections, 196 follow-up inspections, and 80 miscellaneous inquiries. In 1974, 86 properties were found to comply with the Act. Minor and major defects were found on 187 properties. The owners of 42 properties were given notice in writing to improve the situation, and, in the case of 145 inspections that revealed defects, verbal direction resolved the difficulty. Again, it is pleasing to note that not even one conviction was recorded throughout the vast rural community. I do not think there is any doubt that co-operation between the departmental officer and property owners has emerged from the two-year exercise.

A further report from the department's file reveals that a general overall upward trend was achieved in the percentage of conditions found satisfactory in the State's accommodation for shearers. One can only conclude that the utmost co-operation is being extended by South Australian woolgrowers generally. Therefore, I believe there is no need whatever to expand the inspectorial staff, bearing in mind that Mr. Heindrich has the co-operation of every country police officer in the field. I further understand, after consultation with several police officers, that they have no objection to carrying out this work in the ordinary course of their duties. Clause 8, which relates to the inspection of buildings used for accommodation, includes a penalty for obstructing an inspector. This is the first part of the Bill to which I have a real objection. Clause 8 (1) provides:

> An inspector may at any time enter and inspect any shearing shed or building used for the accommodation of shearers for the purpose of determining whether any requirement of this Act has been contravened.

It is appreciated that inspectors need to enter properties to inspect the premises in the ordinary course of their duties. I am bitterly opposed to this provision, whereby an inspector may enter at any time. More particularly, no provision is made requiring an inspector to introduce himself to the property owner or his agent. This is a fundamental courtesy. Although I have no evidence to suggest that Mr. Heindrich, the State's only inspector, has abused or ignored this courtesy, he may not always be the inspector. The legislation should provide for principles and laws to be adopted and should not take into account reliance on personality.

Therefore, it is reasonable that the Minister should consider at the appropriate time at least some reasonable written or verbal notice to the property owner to be given as soon as practicable before entry. I appreciate that if an inspector is in the outback he cannot write a letter to everyone, setting out times of arrival, and so on; there is no suggestion that this should be written into the legislation. It is imperative (and I am sure I speak for most growers) that at least the basic courtesy is observed. The inspector should be required to give fair and reasonable notice of his intention to inspect. Upon arriving at the property, he should take reasonable steps to introduce himself, explaining the purpose of his visit. I have no doubt that the Minister will see the merit of inserting a general framework in the Bill (we need not set out details at this stage), with provision for particulars to be included by regulation.

The interests of property owners, their wives and families should be protected. It seems only fair that an inspector, on entering premises, should be required to make himself known on arrival. I want to refer to the pattern followed over many years regarding inspectors and other persons entitled to enter a property. Section 75 of the Commonwealth Pastoral Award provides:

> (1) A duly accredited representative of the union may:
>
> (i) for the purpose of ensuring the observance of this award, enter premises where work covered by this award is being carried on and may for that purpose inspect any work and wages books and records . . .

Section 75 clearly spells out that an inspector may have the right of entry and that he is entitled to go on to a property if he, at the earliest possible time, informs the employer or his representative of the purpose of his visit and produces his authority, when requested. In addition he must not interfere with or interrupt any work being done. Although I recognise the need for the right of entry of an inspector to be preserved, I believe it is only fair that we should recognise, courteously, the rights of the property owner and his family in this matter.

Another section in the Pastoral Award provides for right of entry of the representative acting on behalf of employees. That representative would come from a union. Union officials have a similar right of entry and are required to take similar steps to those that should be inserted in the legislation. The relevant provision in the award covering union officials is as follows:

Under both the Federal and State awards union officials are now allowed a limited right of entry on to employers' properties. The union official is required to produce an authority in writing by the President of his association and certified by the Industrial Registrar and, on producing same, the employer is obliged to allow him access to his property.

That is slightly different from the wording of the Bill, but it means the same thing: a union official or an inspector is entitled to enter a property. I believe such entitlement should be preserved, but upon entry such a person should be required to introduce himself courteously.

Mr. Max Brown: It cuts both ways.

Mr. CHAPMAN: Yes, but it is important that both aspects be preserved. People are not threatened with tarring and feathering on every property they enter, but a clash of personalities sometimes results in this type of threat floating around. The purpose of debating this Bill is not to take the opportunity to enter into an argument on that topic; however, I am happy that the subject has been raised and will talk about it at any time.

Clause 8 deals with the penalty that can be incurred if an inspector's job is in any way interfered with or if he is hustled or prevented from carrying out his duty. I believe that a severe penalty should be prescribed. My only criticism is that the clause relates to penalty only and not to maximum penalty. I am not certain about this, but I believe the term "penalty" in the ordinary definition of various Acts means maximum penalty, so I ask the Minister to comment on that matter.

I support the contents of clause 9, except that subclause (1) should provide for the Minister to extend further the period of compliance for an additional 12 months if that is deemed necessary. I suggest that, with the gross shortage of building materials and suitable labour nowadays, this is not an unreasonable request. I have not prepared an amendment to this clause, nor do I intend to draft one. Clearly, reasonable time is provided in which to bring quarters or working conditions up to date; however, there are the exceptions to which I have referred. Parallel to clause 6, it seems appropriate that the Minister should have written into the regulations at least sufficient wording to allow him in certain circumstances to extend the period for establishing appropriate quarters beyond that which is presently contained in the legislation. In fact, I believe the period should be extended by 12 months. Not only is there a shortage of building materials and labour: it must also be borne in mind that some shearing sheds and accommodation facilities that have to be upgraded are in outlying areas which, although not inaccessible, are localities in which it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to build. Because of the general situation prevailing in rural areas, I believe it would not be unreasonable for the Minister to recognise in some cases the need to extend the time, especially where major alterations are needed or where major installations are necessary to comply with the legislation.

I am sure that the Minister will appreciate that in some cases the entire shearing shed area or accommodation to be provided is so inadequate that it would be unwise and uneconomic to try to bring such accommodation up to date. Indeed, in some cases total replacement of facilities is required. It seems to me that the maximum 12-month period should be flexible enough to allow another 12 months in which the installations could be made. This is especially so when one bears in mind that, in 1972, the then Commonwealth Treasurer (Mr. Crean) took away the only real inducement from growers when he denied property owners and woolgrowers the right to enjoy a taxation deduction in respect of such expenditure. That measure, which proved what a sensitive area this is, took away the incentive that these people had to improve conditions for their workmen. I believe that that was a step backwards: it not only created a heavier financial burden on woolgrowers but also took away the real inducement to improve conditions for employees.

Clause 10, which deals with proceedings, is acceptable. Clause 11 deals with the making of regulations under the Act, in respect of which there is to be a limited framework. Certainly there is no detail in the Bill before us but I expect that the regulations will be prepared carefully. However, within the ambit of clause 11, I believe it is essential that such regulations be prepared in conjunction with the growers' organisations. In fact, the basic draft of such regulations should be circulated in sufficient time for objections and comments to be put forward by all the parties concerned. I do not believe this is an unreasonable request. I am sure that the Minister, if he considers the matter briefly, will agree that it is in the interests of the industry and the people concerned with that industry that all parties should meet for the purpose of preparing regulations. I do not mean that the Minister or officers of his department should forward to the South Australian Stockowners Association or the United Farmers and Graziers Association a copy of what they intend to submit to Parliament by way of regulations. What I am saying is that the basic discussions should be held between officers of his department and people representing grower organisations. Only good can come out of such a two-way discussion in the preparation of regulations.

It seems appropriate to cite one or two statistical figures in relation to the wool industry, so I should like to talk about sheep and the properties on which we hope to have accommodation upgraded. There are only 15 500 000 sheep in South Australia, and with careful planning they could be shorn by fewer shearers than we now engage. As the result of some organisation and upgrading of facilities, the job could be done more cheaply for the woolgrower while, at the same time, providing a wage and salary range for employees that would be more attractive than the one applying today. This is a valuable industry and it should be operated as a business. The whole distribution of men in this work is disorderly, and growers should be taking action to stagger shearing starting dates. There should be a wider spread of jobs throughout the year instead of their being limited to seasonal work, a system that has been used for many years.

Some growers use a starting date because their family has used that date for generations, but they have no real reason for starting on September 1 or the last Monday in September. Many woolgrowing families that stick rigidly to their ideas will not alter dates that were adopted by their predecessors. Let us consider the State shearing programme in 1972: for the seven months December to January, 5 289 000 sheep were shorn, yet over 10 000 000 sheep were crammed into five months from July to November. In each of the months January, April, May and June, fewer than 300 shearers were engaged, but in February the figure was 450; in March, 570; in July, 880; in August, 1 550; in September, 1 890; in October, 1 850; and in November, 1 300.

I have no hesitation in saying that woolgrowers cannot afford the luxury of unorganised and erratic employment of its work force. This "she's right Jack" attitude must go. I suggest that, in the interests of the industry and in an effort to attract people to it, we must consider the need to upgrade accommodation and obtain better working conditions that will tend towards recognising the shearing industry as a real profession, a profession that has not been recognised properly up to now in this country. It is incredible that, despite the recognition of a shearer or an employee in the industry when he is needed to do a job, the moment the last sheep goes out of the door he is not wanted.

Mr. Max Brown: You're getting away from the Bill.

Mr. CHAPMAN: I am spot on: I do not know whether the honourable member understands, but this is a sensitive subject for me because I have been in that position in the field and on the job. In accordance with the Minister's comments, there is a real responsibility of the grower and of the employee and, if both discharge their responsibilities, there is no reason why this industry cannot progress and be recognised in the way I have described. I welcome the proposed upgrading of conditions as set out by the Minister.

Mr. Wright: How do you know you support them when you don't know what they are?

Mr. CHAPMAN: Yes I do.

Mr. Wright: No you don't.

Mr. CHAPMAN: With the Minister's co-operation, which I am sure will be forthcoming, his department with representatives of grower organisations will produce draft regulations that should be appropriate to the Bill. The Bill clearly outlines the framework of the needs of the industry. I said earlier that I had been involved in this industry for about 25 years, and I can guarantee to the House that the provision of good quarters and good working conditions will attract good men. If there is an industry that needs recognition, it is this one, including the recognition of the skilled profession that it provides. I support the Bill. I have no doubt that, if it is implemented with the appropriate regulations that are to be drafted in conjunction with the organisations concerned, both the shearing industry and the woolgrowing industry will benefit.

Mr. WRIGHT (Adelaide): Unlike the member for Alexandra, who supports the Bill in part, I support it in its entirety. I commend the Minister of Labour and Industry for his forethought in introducing such legislation. The original legislation has been operating for many years but, previously, no-one had the forethought to introduce a Bill with regulations which in my opinion will make the situation much easier to control and provide shearing industry employees with a much quicker way of solving their accommodation problems.

I am not sure of the attitude of all Opposition members or of members of another place, but this legislation will be similar to legislation governing the safety, health and welfare regulations that have been working so magnificently in this State since the introduction of control by regulation. If Opposition members fear that it will be too easy for the Government to control the regulations of the Act, I remind them that it will first be necessary for a decision to be made by representatives of the union, employer organisations, and the Minister's department. The regulations will then have to be considered by the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation, and that will be another check. Finally, they will come before this House to be considered. Therefore, if there are opponents to this Bill, I am pointing out that they should not adopt an attitude of opposition, because there are two ways by which the final draft of the regulations can be stopped before they become law.

In dealing with this situation, we should consider the industry in its entirety. The member for Alexandra dealt with it to some extent mostly through the eyes of employers. Although he suggested that he had had experience as a shearer, most of his experience in the industry has been either as an owner of sheep or as a contractor, and contractors are in a different category from a shearing employee because they are on opposite sides of the fence. I have had much experience as a shearer and as a worker in all aspects of the industry, except as a shearing contractor: I did not pull that occupation on, but I have had about 30 years experience in the industry and can therefore speak with some authority.

When dealing with workers in this industry and referring to their accommodation, one is speaking about their home and not "That's the shearers quarters in the corner" or "That's were they'll live for the next two or three weeks or for the duration of the shearing." One is speaking of a permanent structure in which a shed hand, a wool-press worker, a shearer, or a cook will live during the whole of the shearing season. That is the dividing line. It is no good contractors and woolgrowers talking about a three-week proposition and saying, "It'll do." I have lived in shearing sheds; I was forced to do so because of economic circumstances. I have been thrown some chaff and a bag and told to fill it for a mattress. On one property I visited, the accommodation in a shed was such that I would not start; my principles prevailed, and I walked away from the shed, as did every other shearer.

The member for Alexandra talked about flogging shearers if they happened to get drunk and knock over a bit of furniture. We all know the attitude of the member for Alexandra towards the worker. He expresses it every day in some way or another. It is obvious that he will not support the shearing fraternity and oppose the employer organisation (woolgrowers) from which he derives the main part of his living. I can cite many instances where the provisions of the Act have not been complied with. The member for Alexandra said that 206 inspections made by the shearing inspector last year revealed faults existing within the industry. If there is an Act covering shearing accommodation with which not only shearers but also the owner must comply, that owner has a direct responsibility to see that proper accommodation is provided for shearers; as I have pointed out, that accommodation is to be the shearers' home.

Mr. Chapman: You agree also it ought to be in proper condition when they leave?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes, but I would not support flogging somebody who became drunk. I suggest that the member for Alexandra is the only Parliamentarian left in Australia who supports capital and corporal punishment. Even the Liberal Party in Victoria is introducing legislation that will correct the situation concerning capital punishment in that State. As has been said many times in this House, the most Victorian and backward member of the Liberal Party is the member for Alexandra. I was a little surprised when he praised the Bill at all; I thought he had changed his attitude, but I did not have to wait long to see that the leopard had not changed its spots, because out came the reference to flogging.

When I refer to shearers I am referring also to shed hands, whom I do not want left out of this debate. Before being diverted by the member for Alexandra, I was talking about the various types of accommodation offered to shearers. In some cases there were no toilets, and palliasses (bags of hay) were used as mattresses, the sheds often being rat infested. All these things have existed in the pastoral industry. I am not saying they exist now, because Government legislation has lifted the standard, but it has not lifted it to the standard applying in other industries. The best accommodation that employers can provide in Australia is the mobile accommodation provided for construction workers. It is delightful accommodation; in fact it is better accommodation, even though it is mobile, than is being provided by way of permanent accommodation in the shearing industry. However, shearers are still living in substandard accommodation, and that cannot be denied. As far back as 1968-69, the construction company working on the Moomba pipeline—

Mr. Chapman: What has that got to do with the Bill?

Mr. WRIGHT: It has much more to do with it than the honourable member's remarks. He was giving pastoralists a lecture on how they could save money, and if he can digress so can I. I am making a comparison between two standards of accommodation. As far back as 1968 or 1969, a construction company was providing air-conditioned huts for the men to live in, as well as providing air-conditioned amenity rooms for playing snooker, table tennis, darts and quoits. I see that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition agrees with me. Even if pastoralists in this State comply with the Act (and I say in many cases this is not so) it is still substandard accommodation that is provided, compared to other industries. The State and Commonwealth Railways are providing new accommodation, the Engineering and Water Supply Department also provides good accommodation, and the Postmaster-General's Department provides the best accommodation in Australia; there is no doubt about that.

Mr. Chapman: It has the opportunity of charging what it likes for its product, whereas the grower has no control.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Chapman: If the member for Adelaide wants to continue to provoke he must be prepared—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Alexandra has had an opportunity to speak in this debate. If the honourable member is going to disregard the Chair, I will take the necessary steps. I warn the member for Alexandra. The honourable member for Adelaide.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not my fault, surely, if the honourable member can be provoked so easily by the truth. If he wants to be provoked, let him be; it does not worry me, because he knows I am telling the truth. He appears to be the only one on the other side who has any doubt. I am getting assent from everyone else.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Adelaide to come back to the Bill.

Mr. WRIGHT: I shall return to the Bill. I wanted to make that comparison between shearing industry accommodation and accommodation supplied by other industries which I consider to be of a reasonable standard. The pastoral industry is a long way behind the times. I will deal now with something that the member for Alexandra has said.

Mr. Venning: He'd know what he was talking about, too.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is a matter for argument. He was discussing the labour requirement and was saying that at certain times of the year it was impossible to obtain shed hands and other employees in the industry. Anyone who knows about shearing times knows that in March and September there always is a shortage of shearers. In the past 10 years, in my opinion the shearing industry has been the most degraded industry in Australia. That statement does the Australian Workers Union no credit. However, the award, which is a Commonwealth award, was the most neglected in Australia and people were leaving the industry. The difficulty was that wages were low and conditions bad. Who would want to offer himself for service in the industry with the worst conditions in Australia? I have shorn sheep in temperatures up to about 40°C. The water bag was dry, and no refrigerator was provided. In fact, refrigerators are not provided now and, if a man wants a drink of cold beer in the evening, he must put it into the cook's refrigerator, if the cook will allow him to do that. Refrigerators never have been supplied so that men can have a cold drink when they come home from working in those conditions.

That is why I say that the industry has been neglected. I would not go back shearing for $100 for 100 sheep. I hate even going past Naracoorte, or some other place, because I can see the conditions. How many men can shear after they reach 50 years of age? They have no superannuation scheme and, when they have finished their working life, the contractors put them out on the scrap heap.

Mr. Venning: Oh!

Mr. WRIGHT: The member for Rocky River would be the first to do it. There would be no doubt about his attitude to the working class.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to confine his remarks to the Bill and to the matter of accommodation.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not want to disagree with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the member for Alexandra has been allowed to traverse all over the place. Surely if that is his right it is also my right. I made my comment merely because an employer on the other side interjected.

Mr. Coumbe: What is your opinion of the accommodation at present?

Mr. WRIGHT: The standard is extremely poor, compared to the standard in other industries. I have validly made my point about the figures given by the member for Alexandra of 206 inspections of shearers' accommodation last year having shown the accommodation to be faulty. Surely that spells out the situation, and there can be no question about that. Not only is the standard set out in the Act not good but also a comparison with other industries is not good.

I will deal now with the need for an inspector. For many years the A.W.U. in this State was trying to obtain, through legislation or by Government appointment, the services

of a shearers' accommodation inspector. That officer was vital to the industry because our organisers were travelling all over the State, at high cost and without powers. All that an organiser could do was report the matter to the local policeman. My argument contradicts what the member for Alexandra has said, but we had difficulty in getting a member of the Police Force to go to shearing sheds in small country towns. I would not blame the police officer, because he would know the grazier and perhaps would play bowls with him on Saturday afternoon. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has a good memory and he will recall that, following the defeat of the Dunstan Government in 1968, the Secretary of the A.W.U. (Don Cameron) and I approached him to have a shearers' accommodation inspector appointed. The wheels were put in motion to make that appointment, but the move was cancelled.

There was agitation for many years about this problem, which was twofold. Accommodation was not being inspected properly, and we had difficulty because organisers were not able to do the other work that was necessary, but the Liberal Government did not appoint the inspector. It is no good the member for Alexandra telling us that he supports the appointment, because if he had been a member of the Government at that time he would have been told not to support it.

Mr. Chapman: You speak for yourself.

Mr. WRIGHT: It has been proved that the A.W.U. was right then (as it is now) in trying to improve standards for its members. I am not sure of the attitude now being adopted by the member for Alexandra, but I have had placed on my desk what seem to be amendments.

The SPEAKER: Order! No amendments are before the House.

Mr. WRIGHT: I apologise, but the member for Alexandra has referred to matters that he considers ought to be included in the Bill. They deal mainly with a requirement that the inspector notify the owner of a property as to his date of arrival to inspect the property. I cannot see much wrong with that in principle, and I will not labour the point by saying that I am totally opposed to it, but I do foresee difficulties. If the inspector was responsible for the whole State, as I understand he would be, he probably would leave Adelaide one week and would not return for five or six weeks. Therefore, he could not tell the owner when he would be on the property.

He would have to deal with many matters, such as disputes at shearing sheds. He would have difficulty, as I have had, with a grazier, being abused by him and being told to get off the property. Such occurrences are not isolated: they have happened many times. Further, if the owner was not on the property when the inspector arrived (and this could happen, especially in such areas as outside Tarcoola), would the inspector leave the property because the owner was not there? The inspector could be 600 kilometres from Adelaide, and surely he should proceed with the inspection.

The other point raised by the member for Alexandra was that there was no provision that the inspector would have to introduce himself and say why he was on the property. My impression is that, when anyone enters a property, he always introduces himself to the owner, and that applies to shearing inspectors, people selling tyres, people who go on to one property in order to get to another property, and so on. This is a formality, with people generally being well received, although union organisers and inspectors do not always get a good reception. Problems arise when an owner does not want someone on his property at any stage. Another matter connected with an inspector's being compelled to inform a property owner that he will inspect a property is that an owner could then tidy up the place, renovating it in such a way that its real nature was camouflaged. That practice should not be allowed.

The member for Alexandra also said that compensation should be payable in cases where equipment was destroyed wilfully or by neglect. I have no hesitation in saying that anyone who damages property wilfully should pay for that damage. The owner of property that is damaged in that way is entitled to recompense. Moreover, shearers who later visit that accommodation may find it in a bad state of repair, following that damage. I do not object to compensation in such cases, and I am sure that the Australian Workers Union would not object. However, I do not agree that compensation should be payable in the case of wilful neglect, as I cannot see how it could be decided that neglect was wilful. In the case of wilful destruction of property, someone has set out deliberately to damage property. However, if negligence by an employee caused damage to occur, I could not agree that the employee should be charged for such damage, whether it be to a hut, a chair, or something else.

I believe the provisions of this Bill will solve many problems that now confront the industry. Solutions to these problems are difficult to achieve, for the industry spreads over the entire State. Inspectors and union representatives cannot police regularly the adequate provision of accommodation. Only infrequently can inspections take place of the conditions in which workers must survive. After the Bill passes, we will have to sit down and work out regulations; this will be the biggest part of the struggle. The member for Alexandra said that he knew what the regulations would be. No member on this side knows what they will be, and I am sure neither the honourable member nor any other member opposite knows what they will be. However, I certainly know what they should be and, if I have any say in the matter, I will stipulate certain standards. I support the Bill, commending it to all members.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I support the principle of the Bill. I am rather sorry that the member for Adelaide has tried to launch a personal attack on the member for Alexandra, who spoke in a fair and unbiased way.

Mr. Slater: Nonsense!

Mr. GUNN: I do not think the honourable member knows anything about the shearing industry. Like the member for Alexandra, I have had some experience in shearing. In some areas of the State, conditions for shearing have not been satisfactory; I have had to work under these conditions myself. Shearing normally takes place in February, when it is most unpleasant work in parts of the State. I can appreciate the feelings of the member for Adelaide, who has represented employees in this industry. However, I am sorry that he adopted the attitude that all employers were wrong and all employees right; that was the tenor of his argument. I believe the Minister should spell out clearly just what he has in mind with regard to the standard of accommodation to be provided.

The regulation-making powers in clause 11 are wide indeed. It would be most unsatisfactory if the Minister later provided regulations that it was necessary for either House to disallow, as this would cause confusion in all sections of the industry. However, the Minister's attitude at the moment indicates that he is treating the matter as a joke, so I would not be surprised by anything he

did regarding the regulations. The Minister and his colleagues should use their common sense on this occasion. I point out that shearers' accommodation is used for only a few weeks a year, yet many thousands of dollars is required to provide it. Having some knowledge of the industry, I know that many small graziers will not be able financially to provide, in one hit, brand new shearers' accommodation. We are not dealing with large pastoralists' properties; in many cases, we are dealing with small graziers. The legislation does not apply to a farmer who does not employ at least four shearers. However, I think in some cases, if demands for financial commitment are too heavy, farmers will reduce their number of stands from four to three.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: There may not necessarily be four shearers; there could be two shearers and two pressers.

Mr. GUNN: I am pleased that the Minister has clarified the position. If that is the case, I foresee problems if the matter is not administered sensibly. A grazier who spoke to me some time ago said that he had been approached by an inspector and that he would spend many thousands of dollars upgrading his facilities, but that he could not do this all at once. This man relies on grazing for his income, so that he cannot subsidise his operations by growing wheat and barley; the type of country in which he operates is not suited to that enterprise. If he was requested in 12 months to spend $15 000 or $20 000, he could not do it and would have to walk off his property. I do not believe that the Minister wants this to take place. I think he himself has had some experience in these matters, so I hope that, when he replies, he will clearly spell out what is foreseen. If a set of regulations were introduced and later disallowed by Parliament, it could cause much confusion. The Minister knows that could happen if the regulations were not sensible.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: It wouldn't be the first time regulations have been disallowed.

Mr. GUNN: True; and it probably will not be the last time, either. I hope that the Minister, during the Committee stage of the Bill, will accept the amendments to be moved by the member for Alexandra, because they are proper amendments, dealing with employees who damage the accommodation in which they will be living during the shearing season. Such damage has been caused on many occasions and graziers have had to foot the bill for that damage.

Mr. Venning: How can you make shearers foot the bill? How do you get blood out of a stone?

Mr. GUNN: It is difficult to enforce proceedings against them, because many shearers are on a property one day and gone the next. When the Minister replies, I hope he will spell out clearly what he intends regarding clause 11, because at this stage many members are not too sure about what it means. In fact, we hope the Minister will use common sense and good judgment, and will discuss the matter with the Stockowners Association of South Australia, and United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated, as well as with contractors in this industry. If the Minister is not willing to be a party to such discussions, I can see many problems arising in relation to this Bill. Rumours are abroad in the community that regulations under clause 11 could contain provisions that air-conditioners must be provided in shearing accommodation. In many cases this would be ridiculous and impracticable, because on many large stations the station owners themselves do not have air-conditioned premises and the cost to them of air-conditioning shearers' quarters could not be justified in any circumstances.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I support the Bill. There has been some crossfire about the history of this industry; indeed, Banjo Patterson told us that. Disagreement in the industry has occurred in the past. There has always been disagreement between shearers and their employers, and not without good reason. The shearer's lot has not always been a bed of roses in the moonlight, with banjos strumming. I do not blame the member for Adelaide, at his stage of life, when he says he would not return to this industry, but it gave me some concern when he referred to Naracoorte, where we have some rather rambunctious stockowners. Generally, people from the South-East are like people all over Australia; there are good and bad. There is general agreement that—

Mr. Wright: I was not referring to you.

Mr. RODDA: I understand that. Accommodation should be supplied for shearers, and it should be updated if necessary. However, that will cause difficulties for some station owners, for whom allowances must be made, their cases being treated on their merits. This measure lays down requirements, and will apply mostly to bigger station properties. I like to believe that the standard of accommodation has been improving gradually, anyway. I concur in what the member for Adelaide said about rough accommodation for shearers being provided in the past. Just after I left school my father believed it would be good experience for me to take a trip at shearing time. I went up north as a roustabout, and had rather a crude introduction to the shearing industry. We travelled about 145 kilometres in an open truck on a cold, frosty night before reaching the station. I believe the shearers' kitchen had been swept, although when we arrived there in the early hours of the morning we found some fatty chops in a meat safe hanging from a tree.

It can be seen, therefore, that some members on this side have roughed it at times. On the occasion I visited the station, we camped on palliasses that were fairly thin; some heavyweights had been on the stretchers, and our bottoms literally touched the floor. As a potential Liberal member of Parliament, that was my introduction to the industry. I therefore have some sympathy for what the member for Adelaide was discussing. It was on a shearing trip that I learnt the noble art of barrowing, which I am sure would not be known by too many members in this place.

The member for Alexandra gave a learned dissertation on the Bill and cast far and wide with his remarks. Undoubtedly, he has had much experience in the industry. I thought he put our case in support of the Bill well. As there are many traps as regards drafting regulations, I hope that, when they are introduced, representatives from all spheres of the industry can consider them, because, after all, they will be far-reaching regulations. They will deal with amenities to be provided for shearers and the minimum standards to which they must conform. Pursuant to subsequent provisions, someone will have to dig deeply into his pockets to upgrade shearers' accommodation. I am sure there is a need for a settling-in period, but that does not take into account the converse argument put by the member for Adelaide, namely, that shearers move around all year and live in various places. It is therefore reasonable that the type of accommodation provided should be spelt out clearly so that it will be maintained at a specific standard.

We must turn our backs on the past and look to the future. The wool industry has a great future in the world, because other countries need wool, and shearers, like growers, are

equally important. With common sense and co-operation from everyone involved in the industry, I can see no reason why this facet of the industry should not be treated with equal importance. It has been stated that this Bill will apply to properties that provide accommodation for four or more shearers. In the district I represent, most shearer accommodation comprises two-stand sheds and in most cases, as in my own case, shearers live with the station owner and his family or go home each evening. Speaking from experience of the shearing season in the South-East, I can say that it has always been a harmonious time of the year and quite a social event. That is certainly the case at Coningsby, near Mosquito Creek, an area that will be remembered by the member for Salisbury. We have never had shearing problems in that area, because shearers are welcome and that situation will continue. Some owners of properties in my district may need time to allow them to provide the required accommodation, because of the present economic situation that confronts the industry. The foreshadowed amendments of the member for Alexandra refer to matters concerning graziers as well as employees in the industry, and are no more than guidelines. I hope that the Minister will accept them, and I support the Bill.

Mr. GROTH (Salisbury): In supporting the Bill, I congratulate the Minister on introducing this legislation, which has been long overdue. Most accommodation for shearers in South Australia is substandard compared to accommodation provided by contractors, and even accommodation provided by Government departments is much better than the accommodation provided in shearing sheds. I could name sheds in which accommodation is good and others in which it is bad, because I have had wide experience in this industry. For two years I worked as a shed hand, for 12 years as a wool presser, and for 16 years as an official of the Australian Workers Union. If this history does not give me experience in the industry, I do not know what does.

Mr. Venning: What about getting payment from a shearer when he damages the accommodation?

Mr. GROTH: That would not be hard to do: the honourable member, as an employer, or the contractor (if labour is engaged through a contractor), has control of the money earned by the shearer, and can retain it if necessary.

Mr. Venning: I'd like to see what happened then!

Mr. GROTH: About 15 years ago I stayed one evening at Jumbuck, an outstation of Commonwealth Hill, as an official of the A.W.U. Two pastoral workers engaged in a punch-up and one knocked the other through the wall, but before I left that property I made sure that both the men responsible paid for the cost of the repairs. If a shearer accidentally damages property, he is willing to pay for the damages, and it seems that no Opposition member has referred to an instance in which property has been damaged and no compensation paid. The member for Adelaide compared the accommodation provided for workers on the Moomba pipeline (and the work was done by contractors) with accommodation provided in the pastoral industry and said that air-conditioning and refrigeration had been used. Under the Shearers Accommodation Act, refrigeration is provided for summer months only, and then it is taken out and probably used in the homestead. At some places refrigeration is left in the shearers' quarters, but, if the team arrives in winter, it is not entitled to use refrigeration.

Mr. Rodda: They wouldn't need any where I am.

Mr. GROTH: When I visited the honourable member's property, he was most courteous to me, but he employs local shearers and need not provide accommodation for them. The honourable member will know Kangaringa in the South-East, and that provides very good shearers' accommodation.

Mr. Chapman: I thought you were going to say Kangaroo Island.

Mr. GROTH: Although the accommodation on the honourable member's property is of the standard required under the Act, I consider it to be substandard, compared to other accommodation provided.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Have you stayed there?

Mr. Chapman: What are you comparing it to, the Grosvenor?

Mr. GROTH: The member for Kavel would not know anything about it.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I stayed there with my family and thoroughly enjoyed it, and thought it perfectly adequate.

Mr. GROTH: Two properties in South Australia (there may be more that I have not visited) provide a fairly reasonable standard of accommodation. One is Kangaringa in the South-East, and the other is Commonwealth Hill in the North-West, but even accommodation provided by those properties, compared to that provided by private contractors' mobile units, is substandard. The member for Victoria would know that the accommodation at Kangaringa is quite good. There can be few other properties in South Australia that provide a standard of accommodation such as this. I can mention one in the district of the member for Eyre about 60 km outside Iron Knob which is putrid, and it is owned by a rich family that ought to be ashamed of itself for asking shearers to live in such accommodation, but unfortunately it comes within the standards laid down by the Act. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I support the Bill. I have listened with much interest to the debate, and I am surprised to hear that so many Government members have had so much experience in the industry. I suppose it is correct to say that when one meets up with people, irrespective of where it is or who they are, one gets to know a bit more of their background, and I have been interested to learn that a few members opposite have had a background in this industry. Members of my family have been on the land for three generations and in our mixed farming business we have been involved in the shearing industry. I have seen the shearing industry develop from the days when I used to go in and turn the grindstone to sharpen the shears for the shearers to a recent announcement that a new method of taking wool off sheep by chemical means is being developed. It is hard to know exactly where this industry will finish.

I believe that in the past it has been necessary to bring in legislation to upgrade facilities, especially in the outback areas; in the nearer country areas, shearers go home each night and return to the shed in the morning. I do not believe shearers want accommodation as good as that mentioned by Government members. They want good, clean accommodation, and anything over and above that is wasted, because it is used for only a few weeks in the year. As much deterioration takes place in the meantime, and because of the financial position of the industry, it should not be necessary to provide the standard of accommodation Government members require. Shearers try to get through their work as quickly as they can and move on to the next shed.

It is interesting to hear of the exercise known as Outward Bound: many young people go into the outback and rough it, yet here we find shearers looking for accommodation equal to and even better than what they have in their own homes. It is unfortunate that such a standard of accommodation should be required when the price of wool is so uncertain. As recently as last season, my own boys asked me if they should hold their wool on the farms or send it to the wool store; as I could not advise them, I sought the advice of a person associated with the wool industry and the Wool Board, and I was told that it did not matter very much what they did, because all they could expect to get for their wool would be sufficient to cover only expenses. That is the position in which the industry finds itself today. It is silly for Government members to talk about elaborate accommodation. The accommodation needs to be satisfactory and of a certain standard, but it should not go beyond that.

Mr. Wright: It should be equal to your own home.

Mr. VENNING: Yes, it should be, and mine is just an average home. Anything over and above that, as recommended by Government members, is ridiculous. I support the legislation, because I believe we have to do all we can to keep people in the industry today. Shearing is not an easy job, and it is unfortunate that, as with primary producers, shearers are paid only for the sheep they shear. Other employees sign a book and there is no measuring what they do during the day. We owe a debt to the shearers, who are willing to earn their living by the sweat of their brow. As has been said today, one does not see many shearers working over the age of 50 years: it is a back-bending job that is not easy, especially when it has been difficult to get the sheep as dry as they should be before they go into the shed. I support the Bill.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE (Minister of Labour and Industry): The shearing problem has been aired this afternoon by people involved in the industry, both producers and people who have worked in the industry, including especially the members for Adelaide and Salisbury. Only the member for Rocky River referred to technological advances in shearing. For years now, producers and others with a financial interest in the industry have been examining some form of mechanical or chemical device that will take the place of the shearer, but they have not been successful. As much as they dislike it, they are stuck with the shearer.

Mr. Venning: That's not what I said.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: I thought the member for Rocky River was keen to encourage—

Mr. Venning: No, that is wrong.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: —further research in this area, and no doubt people involved in this industry will continue to do that. However, I doubt that they will succeed, unless perhaps they can train sheep to take the coats off each other! Banjo Patterson, who was quoted here this afternoon, said in one of his poems that the "ringer of the tubbo is not the ringer here". I was pleased to hear members who contributed to this debate support the Bill in principle. The member for Eyre referred to clause 11: the regulations will be discussed by interested parties, as has been done in the past with other regulatory Bills. Therefore, everyone interested and involved in the industry will be invited to make submissions.

Mr. Chapman: You mean the growers?

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: Yes, and also the unions. They will be invited to make submissions when regulations are being considered. Regulations are placed before the Subordinate Legislation Committee and are then subject to further scrutiny in Parliament, so anyone who has fears about that matter should dismiss them immediately, because there is a double check. I have no objection to the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Alexandra. He has indicated that inspectors should give some information—

The SPEAKER: Order! There are no amendments before the House.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: I was asked to reply to comments that have been made. Of course, the amendments will be discussed in Committee. The honourable member has said that the regulations will cater for most things, except cranky shearers, but he did not mention cranky bosses. I am sure that the regulations will exclude people in that class and also that they will exclude the erection of a gallows.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 passed.

Clause 8—"Inspection of buildings."

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Alexandra has given notice of his intention to move two amendments to this clause. As both amendments are related, I intend to allow the honourable member to speak to both amendments, but at this stage he may move only the first amendment.

Mr. CHAPMAN: I move:

In subclause (1) to strike out "An" and insert "Subject to subsection (1a) of this section, an".

I have referred to this amendment in the second reading debate and have spoken to the Minister about it. It is not unreasonable to request that an inspector extend the courtesy that one would expect. During the debate, there was no reflection on any member of the Police Force, and there was no reflection on Mr. Ken Heindrich, the State inspector. I do not believe that any inspectors in any department have overstepped the mark or been unreasonable. To my knowledge, they have always identified themselves when they have gone on to properties. However, this courtesy should be extended so as to protect the farmer, his wife, or any other member of the family, whether aged or otherwise.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE (Minister of Labour and Industry): I have no objection to the amendment, mainly because we do not want people to be sneaking around the countryside trying to catch someone without letting him know they are in the area. As the honourable member knows, if an inspector was in an area, his presence would soon be known. Further, we do not want to be considered to be a secret society. If there is anything wrong on a property, the owner cannot hide it in a few days. The inspector would soon find it, even if the owner did try to hide it.

Amendment carried.

Mr. CHAPMAN moved to insert the following new subclause:

(1a) Before an inspector enters upon any land for the purpose of carrying out an inspection under this section, he shall give reasonable notice, orally or in writing, to the occupier of the land of his intention to carry out the inspection.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 9 and 10 passed.

Clause 11—"Regulations."

Mr. CHAPMAN: I move to insert the following new subclause:

(2a) The regulations may provide for the recovery by an employer of compensation from a shearer in respect of damage caused wilfully or negligently by the shearer to accommodation or amenities provided under this Act.

The Minister has indicated that he will accept this amendment, and I appreciate that fact. I believe the amendment is self-explanatory.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: I accept the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

CORONERS BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from March 6. Page 2737.)

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): This seemingly innocuous Bill is, in fact, electoral dynamite. Its provisions imply that the electors of the State are without intelligence, being incapable of performing the simplest requirement of indicating their preference of the candidates listed on the ballot-paper. This issue is so vital that, by introducing this Bill, the Government has indicated that it does not accept the intelligence of the people. After an election, the management of the State is critical. Many people give much thought to this matter. If voting patterns over some time are reviewed, it can be seen that people are competent in the way they vote. It was suggested that, because of the large number of candidates on the ballot-paper for the 1974 Commonwealth Senate election, the public would be confused, and the process of voting would be complicated; this applied in other States as well as in South Australia. However, the overall percentage of informal votes was not nearly as great as expected by the Labor Party and other Parties. At that election, the people showed their ability to think the matter through and vote responsibly. This Bill is of no value to anyone except supporters of the Labor Party. It has been presented in order to destroy other Parties.

Mr. Becker: It doesn't help the individual.

Dr. EASTICK: No, it is designed initially to cause division to occur in Parliamentary groups, and such divisions can occur whether those groups are on the right or on the left of the so-called centre. We must consider this Bill in the long term, not just in the short term. A division amongst members of the Opposition Parties could be critical to the people of the State for many years to come. However, as has happened in the past both in the Commonwealth and State fields, the position could be reversed. I do not believe any member opposite would deny that, had we been in Government and introduced a Bill such as this, it could have been to the disadvantage of the Labor Party; it could have been used to drive in a wedge in such a way that the Labor Party would have been prevented from taking office. The Bill has been introduced at this time to seek to alienate people who vote right of centre.

Mr. Becker: Do you think it's immoral?

Dr. EASTICK: I am pleased to accept that the approach of the Government in this matter is immoral, but I will leave that to the honourable member to develop.

The Hon. L. J. King: Other members opposite will suggest that it is a Socialist approach.

Dr. EASTICK: The Bill is designed to destroy the option of an elector to support a minority view or to support a candidate as an individual.

Mr. Payne: How does it do that, if a person can still vote for that person?

Dr. EASTICK: The honourable member should consider what I said about examining this matter in the long term. Clearly, it does not immediately bring about the result to which I have referred, but it drives in the wedge that leads to that situation. Shortly, I will explain to the honourable member that it will also lead rapidly to a situation that opens the way for a first past the post system of voting. In fact, in clause 4 (*c*) the opportunity is created for first past the post decisions. Under that provision, there is no need for an absolute majority to determine who is the successful candidate. I believe that people have a perfect right to support a minority point of view; this option should be open to them. They should not be disfranchised later by the provision that second and third preference votes need not be distributed.

This Bill is a disastrous measure aimed at destroying the electoral system of the State. Indeed, it is similar to a Commonwealth Government measure to introduce an almost identical voting system for the House of Representatives. Members opposite might say, "That is all very well, but it is a concept that has been introduced on a previous occasion in relation to the Legislative Council in South Australia." If members consider the arguments leading up to that measure in this House and in another place, they will see spelt out clearly over some time that there was a genuine desire to ensure that the voting system in one House would not be a mirror image of the voting system in the other House.

In accepting that premise when the matter came before this place in June, 1973, the Opposition indicated clearly that it would not accept a measure that produced a mirror image of a voting system that applied in another place. In bringing this measure before the House, the Government seeks to bring about a mirror image voting system in relation to optional preferential voting. This Bill certainly denies the opportunity for an Independent to be elected to this House. Members opposite, who are now silent, must accept the premise that they are going to advance fairly rapidly to a first past the post voting system, under which a person with a considerable following in a district could be elected to Parliament. The measure is designed to reduce the effects of informal votes, which have consistently been against the best interests of the Australian Labor Party. It attempts to remove the previous disadvantage that applied to the Australian Labor Party in respect of the large percentage of informal votes brought about because so many people vote for one candidate and put no other figure on the voting card.

If honourable members were to consider the voting pattern in the 1973 State election they would ascertain a marked difference in the proportion of informal votes as between various districts. In Adelaide the informal vote was 5·4 per cent; in Albert Park it was 5·5 per cent; in Alexandra it was 4·9 per cent; and so it continues. Later I will seek leave to have the rest of these figures incorporated in *Hansard*, because they are statistical material. In districts in which an issue was fully recognised because it had been developed by both Parties and because people had been asked to consider urgently and deeply the issues involved, there was a marked reduction in the number of informal votes. In other words, where there was an effort by both political Parties to woo the voter and to bring before him the important issue of one Party or the other, there was a marked reduction in the number of informal votes recorded.

In Millicent the informal vote was down to 1·5 per cent and in Brighton it was 1·9 per cent. In most areas (there are one or two exceptions) where there was a major confrontation between the Parties and a strenuous campaign was conducted, the informal vote was extremely low. It is interesting to note that in districts where one Party did not put up a candidate the percentage of informal votes increased considerably, because many people in that district showed their concern about being forced, in effect, to vote for a candidate or a Party with which they did not wish to be associated. When the member for Kavel was first elected to this place, his was the only district in South Australia where a Labor Party candidate did not stand against a Liberal candidate. The member for Kavel was opposed only by a Country Party candidate, and the percentage of informal votes was about 10 per cent. The percentage informal vote in Salisbury in the 1973 State election was 13·2 per cent. It is obvious that many people showed their disenchantment about having to register a vote for an A.L.P. candidate or an A.L.P. sub-candidate (and I use that term in the sense that the sub-candidate, an Independent, was inspired to stand by the A.L.P.). This Bill is designed to reduce the disadvantage that informal votes bring about to the Australian Labor Party. So that honourable members can consider the total percentages of informal votes in the 1973 State election, I seek leave to have that information relating to those percentages incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

PERCENTAGE OF INFORMAL VOTES CAST IN 1973 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Adelaide	5·4
Albert Park	5·5
Alexandra	4·9
Ascot Park	3·3
Bragg	2·7
Brighton	1·9
Chaffey	2·2
Coles	3·3
Davenport	2·5
Elizabeth	3·9
Eyre	3·9
Fisher	3·0
Flinders	6·6
Florey	4·9
Frome	2·9
Gilles	3·5
Glenelg	2·2
Gouger	2·1
Goyder	5·0
Hanson	2·7
Henley Beach	3·2
Heysen	6·5
Kavel	2·3
Light	3·0
Mallee	5·4
Mawson	3·2
Millicent	1·5
Mitcham	2·0
Mitchell	3·2
Mount Gambier	2·3
Murray	2·4
Norwood	3·7
Peake	4·4
Pirie	6·2
Playford	5·8
Price	5·5
Rocky River	2·1
Ross Smith	7·1
Salisbury	13·2
Semaphore	4·3
Spence	7·3
Stuart	7·1
Tea Tree Gully	2·5
Torrens	3·2
Unley	3·7
Victoria	6·2
Whyalla	3·3

Dr. EASTICK: The Bill is a farce in respect of its being of optional advantage to South Australians, because it is an option that goes only so far. It does not allow the total options that should be available to people if they want a real opportunity to determine what they should do with their vote. It is a sugar-coating that is extremely thin; it is a bitter pill, as far as we on his side are concerned, which has potentially disastrous ramifications for the electors of South Australia; and it is certainly another of those Government measures which, like hire-purchase, works on the basis of buy now and suffer later. We do not accept this measure as being worthy of being on the Statutes of this State.

Should any honourable member have the mistaken view that I do not believe there is anything wrong with the Bill, let me make completely clear that it introduces the concept of first past the post voting. Clause 4 (*c*) indicates that it will be no longer necessary for a candidate to have an absolute majority of the formal votes cast to be elected. I believe that any measure that seeks to achieve that end result is against the best interests of the people. For that reason alone I believe the measure should be opposed. I cannot and will not support this pea and thimble exercise by the Government to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of South Australia. I oppose the measure outright.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I have looked through the Attorney-General's explanation of the Bill to find out what the Labor Party has in mind, because a fairly radical change is being sought to be made to the electoral system in this State. The Attorney explained the purpose of the Bill before referring to the clauses, and tried to convince the House that we should adopt a complete change in the voting system, and to do this he used only about 18 lines of explanation. Apparently, the Bill has two parts: the first deals with optional preference voting and the other with casting a vote for the Legislative Council if the name is not on the roll. The part to which the Opposition objects is that which makes a radical change to the electoral system, but only nine lines of the Attorney's explanation are devoted to it. It seems that this Bill has been introduced only as a result of a conference with the Legislative Council, because agreement was not reached earlier, and the optional preference system for the Council has been introduced because the ballot-paper would be cumbersome.

The Attorney has not used one argument to justify introducing this Bill, either for the benefit of members of this House or for the benefit of the public. The first I knew of this proposal occurred when something was floated in the morning press, and the next day we were presented with a Bill introducing an optional preference system in South Australia. There has been no reference to this in the Labor Party policy speech, although that Party has been hammering the doctrine of one vote one value for years in an attempt to gerrymander the electoral districts of this State in its favour, and has gone a long way to achieving that end. The Labor Party has never defined what it means by one vote one value: the nearest it has got to it is that there should be equal numbers of electors in each district so that, by some miracle, the percentage vote cast for one Party will be mirrored in the number of seats it wins.

Mr. Millhouse: You don't support the system of one vote one value?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I do not: there is no such thing as one vote one value as enunciated by the Labor Party and apparently swallowed by the member for Mitcham. The Labor Party is seeking to move towards

a gerrymander in this State under the meaningless catch cry of one vote one value. The arguments advanced have been to the effect that, if we had an equal number of electors in the various districts, we would ensure that the Party gaining over 50 per cent of the votes in the State would govern. That is sheer nonsense, however. It depends largely on where boundaries are drawn, and at present they happen to be drawn very much to the advantage of the Australian Labor Party. This Bill is one of those really democratic insights that has suddenly dawned on the Labor Party in this State, and ranks alongside that really democratic insight of the Attorney-General in connection with compulsory voting. When introducing the Bill, the Attorney's explanation is devoid of all reason and, in order to obtain some inkling of what he means, I had to proceed to that other place from which we may get some insight into Labor Party thinking by reading the debates of its Commonwealth Parliamentary colleagues. This proposal was introduced with other amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act, and that is where I turned in order to find out what motivated the introduction of this Bill.

The reasoning in Canberra was also fairly thin, and two points were advanced by Mr. Daly (Minister for Services and Property) when he introduced the Bill in Canberra. First, the existing preferential voting system has resulted in a high informal vote in Senate elections (he does not refer to the House of Representatives), and secondly, it has led to intolerable delays in finalising election results. Obviously, the Attorney-General cannot use those reasons in this House, so he has given none. That seems to be the background that has led to the introduction of this Bill. As has been pointed out, elections for the Legislative Council have little resemblance to elections in House of Assembly districts. One difficulty that led eventually to a compromise was the nature of the ballot-paper that will now be presented at Legislative Council elections. I still have doubts that this compromise will be found satisfactory at the next election. However, it was not a philosophical reason or one of democratic insight that dawned on the Attorney-General and his Party that caused the compromise settlement.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: It would never dawn on you!

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: When I examine the nature of this democratic insight that dawned on the Labor Party, that is not surprising, because the argument is nonsensical. The ballot-paper for this House will be different from that used for the Upper House, and the reasons for the compromise do not apply in voting for this House. It has been said that the suggested system will reduce the number of informal votes, but that is a matter of conjecture. We can be certain that the dawning of this democratic insight has been the result of the work of the backroom boys of the Labor Party who can see an election advantage in it. Any betting man could punt on that as the basis. This is the first step towards what is popularly called first past the post voting, but that is a misnomer because in that system there is no post.

The candidate with most votes is elected: if one believes that a candidate should have majority support, the post is 50 per cent of the total votes, but this Bill is the first step towards the introduction of another system. The Labor Party has no mandate in this matter. Government members are in a difficult position: they say the Government has a mandate for this because it won an election.

Mr. Payne: What difficult situation are we in?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: In convincing us of the merits of the case. Government members say they have a mandate for every line in their policy speech, but that is nonsense. They won an election with slightly over 51 per cent of the votes and, as members of the public do not examine in detail the election policies of the Labor Party, the Government really has no mandate. This matter was not mentioned until the day before the Bill was introduced, and then it was referred to in the press. Members opposite could not expect this House to consider the matter seriously in such circumstances. There are distinct difficulties in the optional preferential system of voting.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You're basically in favour of optional preferences, aren't you?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Under the preferential system of voting one is assured that the successful candidate enjoys majority support throughout the district, but this is certainly not so with the optional preferences system, which is only a short step away from the first past the post system, which is the popular but, I believe, incorrect description of that system. If three candidates were fielded, one with slightly over one-third of the votes could be elected, and that would also happen if a low percentage of preferences were cast in this electoral system. If a member believes in first past the post voting, he would be expected to support this legislation. If a member does not believe in first past the post voting, I do not believe he could in conscience support this legislation.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: If I had an optional preference I would vote for the L.M. rather than for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Millhouse: Thank you, Hugh!

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: We have a sudden friendship springing up between the member for Mitcham and the Minister of Education. This new-found love affair has restored my faith in human nature, a faith that was almost lost after hearing the Minister of Education refer to the member for Mitcham last week. The inequities of the first past the post system can be demonstrated clearly if we examine recent Commonwealth election results. If we look at the percentage of votes cast in the 1969, 1972 and 1974 Commonwealth elections for the Parties, look at the number of seats won under the preferential system, and look at the number of seats that would have been won under the first past the post system, we can see just how inequitable is the latter system. In 1969 the Australian Labor Party won 47 per cent of the votes cast and the anti-Socialist Parties 49·4 per cent. The seats won were 59 for the Australian Labor Party and 66 for the anti-Socialist Parties.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: What's all this about anti-Socialist Parties? The Country Party is not anti-Socialist.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister should try to sell that to Mr. Anthony. If it had been first past the post voting at that election, the Australian Labor Party would have won 70 seats and the anti-Socialist Parties (the Liberal Party, the Country Party and the Democratic Labor Party) would have won 55 seats.

The Hon. L. J. King: But voting for the House of Representatives is on a preferential basis.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The optional preferential system is only a shade away from the first past the post system. The A.L.P. is keen on having first past the post voting. In 1972, 49·6 per cent of votes was cast for the A.L.P. and 46·7 for the other Parties. The result was that the A.L.P. won 67 seats, whereas the other Parties won only 58 seats. Under the first past the post system, the A.L.P. would have won 81 seats, whereas the Liberal Party and Country Party would have won only 44 seats.

In 1974, 49·3 per cent of votes was cast for the A.L.P., whereas the anti-Socialists received 47·1 per cent, but the A.L.P. won 66 seats and the anti-Socialists 61. Under first past the post voting, the A.L.P. would have won 74 seats and the anti-Socialists 53. From these figures we can see why the Labor Party is keen to take the first long step towards the system, whereas we on this side are not keen because the system is thoroughly undemocratic. Regarding the British elections (Britain has a pure form of first past the post voting), the inadequacy of the system is shown in the results.

The Hon. L. J. King: What about optional preferences?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: This Bill is a move by the Labor Party toward first past the post voting, which is only a short step away.

The Hon. L. J. King: How can it be?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The Attorney wants to get me away from this point because he knows what I am saying is true.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: In Britain the Conservatives received 38·1 per cent of the votes and won 46·7 per cent of the seats, whereas Labour received 37·2 per cent of the votes and won 47·5 per cent of the seats. The Liberals received 19·3 per cent of the votes but won only 2·2 per cent of the seats. Other candidates received 5·4 per cent of the votes and won 3·6 per cent of the seats Although the Labour Party did not get the biggest percentage vote, it won most of the seats and formed a Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must link his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The optional preference system is three-quarters of the way towards the system I have been describing. There are only two possible reasons for the introduction of the Bill and the Labor Party has advanced neither in this debate. It could perhaps claim that it is simpler, but I think that the public would be completely confused about optional preferences. Some members of the public would think that "optional" applied to the poll itself, and others would be uncertain about the method of voting. The figures for the Senate election, for which there were many candidates (namely, over 70 in New South Wales), shows that the informal vote there was no higher than it was at a previous election when only 25 candidates stood. In 1961, there were 25 candidates and a 12·4 per cent informal vote. In 1974, there were 73 candidates and a 12·3 per cent informal vote. In Mr. Whitlam's electorate (Werriwa) in 1974, a record number of 12 candidates stood against him, yet there was only a 2·46 per cent informal vote. I am talking about the complexity of the card influencing the informal vote.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Tell us about the informal votes in the Kavel District?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I will, after my time has expired. In the neighbouring seat of Blaxtown (N.S.W.), a 2·11 per cent informal vote was cast; in Chifley, 2·22 per cent; and in Prospect, 2·25 per cent. The last experience in Australia with optional preference voting was in the 1941 Queensland State election. The Labor Party won that election with 51 per cent of the vote, and gained 66 per cent of the seats. One can see the reason for the Labor Party's seeking to introduce this legislation in South Australia, because it could at present get over 55 per cent of the seats in this State with 51 per cent of the vote. In the last Parliament, it had over 55 per cent of the seats but less than 51 per cent of the votes. When the optional preferences system was last tried in Australia (namely, in 1941 in Queensland), Labor received a meagre 51 per cent of the votes but won 66 per cent of the seats.

The Hon. L. J. King: The last time we debated similar legislation, you said that that was due to a gerrymander, whereas now you say it was the result of optional preferences.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: There are many ways of working a gerrymander and, if there is any expert at it, it is the Labor Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must come back to the Bill.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: The only other experience in the past few decades of optional voting in Australia has been in Queensland. I am describing the results of that election, and that is what the Bill is all about. In the seat of Windsor there were three candidates, namely, Moorehouse with 4 185 votes, O'Sullivan with 1 401 votes, and Williams with 4 491 votes. Only 561 O'Sullivan voters, or 55 per cent of his 14 per cent primary vote, exercised their preferential option; of these, 462 votes went to Moorehouse, and he was declared elected with only 46·1 per cent of the vote clearly supporting him.

There are many more examples. Again, in the 1942 by-election in the seat of Cairns an anomaly resulted whereby Barnes got 2 101 votes, or 30·5 per cent of the total votes; Crowley got 2 169 votes, or 31·4 per cent; Griffin got 851 votes and Tucker got 1 776 votes, or 38·1 per cent of the total vote between them. Only 600 Griffin and Tucker votes (or 8·7 per cent of their 38 per cent primary votes) exercised their optional preference; of these, 435 went to Barnes, who was declared elected with only 36·7 per cent of the total vote. Not many democratic insights were shown by Queensland electors during the long regime of the Labor Party, but one democratic insight (to coin a phrase used by the Attorney-General) was shown by Queenslanders in 1941.

The Hon. L. J. King: I never used that phrase.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I thought the Attorney's memory would be so good as to recall that, when we were debating voluntary voting, he said he believed that compulsory voting in Australia was one of the few democratic insights.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in this Bill about compulsory voting, and the honourable member will not be permitted to continue in that way.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I was merely refreshing the Attorney's memory. The optional preferential system for the sort of election that we have in South Australia was last used in 1941 in Queensland, when it was found to be completely wanting. The Attorney has given no reason for introducing the system, except that it was adopted after compromise with the Legislative Council to overcome a difficult situation concerning the ballot-paper. The Attorney surely does not seriously expect the Opposition to agree to this. In his most lucid moments, he must realise that the proposition is completely unacceptable to members on this side. Past experience with this system in this country has shown it to be lacking, and for this reason we completely reject the Bill.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): This is a completely shonky Bill. That statement explains my approach to the whole matter. The Bill has been introduced by the Attorney-General, who is the Chief Law Officer in this State. I have spoken in this House on many electoral matters and I suppose that I will have to do so again before long if

the Government continues in this way. Has the Government introduced this Bill in this form to help itself, or has it introduced it to help the Liberal Party, the Country Party, the Liberal Movement, or any person who may wish to seek election to Parliament as an Independent? The Government has introduced the Bill to help itself and it has put it up in a gift-wrapped package.

The people have not been warned of this move: it has been sprung on them. It was not referred to in the Government's policy speech for the 1973 State election. True, the policy speech referred to the Legislative Council, but this measure was not given any publicity at all. The Bill must help the Labor Party. When I first saw it, my reaction was one of deep suspicion about why the Government was introducing it in this form at this time, but inevitably I have concluded that the Government has done it to help itself or to damage some other Party or organisation. Our learned Attorney has said few things about the measure in his explanation. The explanation is one of the shortest that I have seen for a Bill that could affect the whole future of Governments of any political complexion in South Australia.

Mr. Simmons: Its merits are self-evident.

Mr. COUMBE: The member for Peake may be a crystal ball reader, and probably his Minister has oiled him up, but the honourable member should realise that members of this House who are not members of the Government Party did not see the Bill until it was introduced, although we read about it in the newspaper before then. Members of the Attorney's profession are usually verbose in putting a case in court, but when I examine the explanation carefully to find out the reason for the introduction of the Bill the only phrase that I can find, apart from statements dealing with machinery measures about which we are not arguing, is the part of the explanation that states:

This change is now desirable, as for practical purposes the same list of electors now applies to both House of Assembly and Legislative Council electors.

We know that, following the conference in 1973 that I and the Attorney attended as members—

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: You made your contribution to that conference with distinction.

Mr. COUMBE: Yes, and I will deal with that.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member is confined to the Bill and he cannot deal with that matter.

Mr. COUMBE: The Attorney is saying that, since 1973, for all practical purposes the same list of electors has applied to both Houses. A common roll is used, but that does not mean that we should accept blithely and without further explanation from the Government an alteration in the method of electing members of the House of Assembly. The Attorney could have elaborated on that terse phrase, but he did not do so.

He should remember that the systems are different, because the list system is used in the Legislative Council. We are dealing with an optional preferential system, but optional preferences under the list system are different from what the Attorney has proposed in this instance. As the Attorney has not explained why we should change the method that has prevailed for a long time, I do not see why we should accept his vague method of presentation. I come back to my first point: this is a shonky Bill. It has not been explained properly and no reason has been given for altering the system.

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

Mr. COUMBE: Under this Bill, the Government intends to move away from the full preferential system to the optional preference system of voting. Under the former, electors have an opportunity of indicating the candidate they wish to elect and then progressively, if there are more than two candidates, the candidates they next prefer. Surely, this is the best possible democratic way of helping voters, quite apart from candidates. After all, we should surely be concerned about voters, who must put up with whichever Government is elected.

The alternative to that system, to which we are all accustomed, is the first past the post system, which obtained in Australia for many years. It is a matter of record that successive Governments, Commonwealth and State (except Tasmania, which operates under the peculiar Hare-Clark system), of different political persuasions have all moved away from the first past the post system to the full preferential system that we know today. This is the system which the people know and to which they have become accustomed. Having got used to it, they vote accordingly. Even when an extraordinarily large number of candidates stood in New South Wales in the recent Senate election, it was remarkable that fewer informal votes were cast than was expected.

All members know that the Senate is elected under the full preferential system. I should now like to refer to two examples of the first past the post system, to which this Bill is closely aligned. I refer to the publication entitled *Australian Electoral Methods and Historical and Critical Survey*, written by Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge. Dealing with the first past the post system, Mr. Partridge referred to the British and Australian systems, stating:

It is an unsatisfactory system from many points of view, particularly if elections are conducted on the simple majority method—a defect which Australian Parliaments early set out to remedy, though the Mother of Parliaments still muddles through with the system at its worst.

He there refers to what has happened in Australia under, we hope, an enlightened system. I will now give the House an example of what can, and in fact did, happen in South Australia under the first past the post system, to which this Bill is getting close. In this respect, I refer to page 77 of the same publication. In 1917, when this system applied in South Australia, a by-election was held for the then East Torrens District, which would have taken in part of the district that the Attorney-General, who introduced the Bill, now represents. There were four candidates, and it was a first past the post system.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: And voluntary voting, too.

Mr. COUMBE: Irrespective of that interjection, the result in that election was as follows: Mr. Hamilton, the Liberal candidate, received 3 956 votes; Mr. Olifent, the National Labor candidate, 3 663 votes; Mr. Grealy, the Official Labor candidate (members will notice the subtle difference), received 3 041 votes; and Mr. Addison, an Independent candidate, received 135 votes. A total of 10 795 votes was therefore cast, and Mr. Hamilton was elected, even though he did not have an absolute majority and 6 839 formal votes were cast against him compared to 3 956 cast for him. Mr. Hamilton, who received about 290 votes more than Mr. Olifent, was elected, although there was nearly a two-to-one vote against him.

I am citing this example (and I will tie up this analogy with the Minister's proposal) to show what could happen in future under such a voting system. A candidate could be elected even though almost twice as many votes were cast against him as were cast for him. Surely this is the most ludicrous position that one could ever conceive.

Under the full preferential system, an elector can indicate not only his first preference but also his second, third and any other preferences.

Mr. Langley: What about local government?

Mr. COUMBE: For the benefit of the member for Unley, I point out that, if the first candidate is not successful, the candidate with the next to most votes is elected in his stead under the preferential system. The proposed optional preference system is really putting the clock back again, and it is being done by the Australian Labor Party, the so-called pace-setter Party. This is happening because of several factors: first, because it would be close to the first past the post system to which I have referred and, secondly, it would tend seriously to confuse electors, not make voting simpler for them.

It would lead to greater misunderstanding, electors having become accustomed to the present system. Also (and this is undeniable) it would tend immediately to polarise the two major political Parties. There is not the slightest doubt about that, and the Minister of Development and Mines would be the first to agree with me in this respect. It would make it more difficult, and in some cases almost impossible, for small Parties to achieve electoral success. Indeed, it would make it virtually impossible, except in exceptional circumstances, for an Independent candidate to be elected. Surely, in this day and age and in a democratic society, we should be thinking first of the elector. This Bill puts the clock back, and apparently that is what the Labor Party wants to do.

Under the optional preference system in the Bill, if he wants to cast a valid vote when there are more than two candidates, the voter can put the figure "1" in the square alongside the name of the candidate of his choice; he can vote for the candidate of his choice and then indicate some preferences (he might put a figure "2" in the square alongside the name of his second choice and leave the other squares blank); or he can fill in the whole paper, as is now necessary for a valid vote. If there were only two candidates, a person would not have to worry about preferences, but at recent elections, with few exceptions, three and sometimes four candidates have contested seats for the House of Assembly, with five candidates contesting one seat. I have outlined the alternatives under the proposed system.

Mr. Langley: What's wrong with that procedure?

Mr. COUMBE: The Attorney is leading the electors up the garden path, using the guise of the supposed simplicity of the proposed system. However, at present everyone knows what he has to do to cast a valid vote; he must fill in all the squares. A new system must lead to some confusion amongst electors. Why should we discard a tried and proven system of voting in this State to which people have become accustomed? This is really the nub of the problem. Why should we discard a system that I believe is completely fair to all Parties? Once again, the Labor Party is living in the past, looking over its shoulder at the spectre of the Democratic Labor Party and the effect it had on the Labor Party in years gone by.

Members interjecting:

Mr. COUMBE: Members opposite have come in on cue. People have become used to the present fair system, so why introduce a new system? Obviously, the Labor Party is introducing a system that will be to its advantage.

The Hon. L. J. King: Is that the basis on which you operated when in Government?

Mr. COUMBE: I do not believe the Attorney would introduce electoral legislation which would not help his own Party or which would be to the advantage of another Party. As I have said, the proposal in the Bill would polarise the two major Parties. I point out that everyone over the age of 18 years is entitled to vote at elections and to stand for Parliament. There is nothing in the Constitution to say that a person must belong to a political Party before standing for Parliament. Even my heraldic friend the member for Spence would agree with that, and he is a great writer in support of democracy.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: He is one of our foremost journalists.

Mr. COUMBE: Even though he may not be a member of the Australian Journalists Association.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: We might be able to arrange that, too.

Mr. COUMBE: I am sure that is so, in view of what was said during Question Time this afternoon. We need a voting system that is fair to all Parties concerned, to the voting public, and to all candidates. The system in the Bill does not fulfil that criteria, as I do not believe it is fair to all concerned.

The Hon. L. J. King: What's unfair about it?

Mr. COUMBE: I believe that the full preferential system is fair; the Attorney has not said anything to contradict that.

The Hon. L. J. King: Never mind about that; what's unfair about the proposed system?

Mr. COUMBE: The optional preferential system in the Bill is so close to a first past the post system that the unfairness of the latter can be attributed to the former. I have spoken about cases of unfairness, referring particularly to one case in South Australia. If the present Government were returned with a large majority (and heaven forbid that that would happen)—

The Hon. L. J. King: But it's not a possibility we can ignore.

Mr. COUMBE: The Attorney is a little frightened about the future; he is trying to ensure that his Party is returned with a large majority. If the Government were returned with such a majority, obviously its next step in the electoral field would be to introduce a Bill providing for a first past the post system of voting, and I contend that such a system would be completely unfair.

Mr. Langley: What about the gerrymander?

Mr. COUMBE: That does not come into this discussion. The honourable member knows that the late Mr. Lawn used to refer to that subject when talking about electoral boundaries. What I have said would happen, and I am sure the Attorney would agree that that would not be fair. Reference was made to the voting system for another place that was achieved in 1973 at a conference, but with his legal mind the Attorney would be the first to agree that that is the list system, which is quite different. I am sure the Minister of Education, with his so-called mathematical mind, would also agree. There is a variation, and the Attorney knows it. The Bill is completely unfair to the people of South Australia and to all the candidates and Parties concerned. The Labor Party is trying to achieve self-perpetuation, and the Bill should be shoved out at the first opportunity.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD (Minister of Development and Mines): I regret that I was placed on the list of speakers after the member for Torrens, because it will be necessary for me to speak at greater length than I had

intended following the remarks of the member for Kavel. It would be most unusual for me to oppose a measure that I advocated in this Chamber before it became the policy of my Party. I have always regarded this as being the fairest system for the voter once he gets into the polling booth, and I am extremely pleased that the Attorney-General has introduced this measure. If I had any criticism it would be that it was unfortunate that, because of the volume of legislation the Government has had to deal with, it could not have been brought on earlier.

I have extracted from the remarks of the two speakers from the other side seven criticisms they have made of the measure. The first was that the ballot-paper for the Legislative Council would be quite different from that for the House of Assembly, although in introducing the Bill the Attorney made the point that we should maintain uniformity as far as possible in the voting procedures for the two places. The second criticism was that there must be something in it for the Australian Labor Party, and that is sufficient reason for members opposite to oppose it. This could explain why a former Liberal Government opposed electoral reform for many years. If it is sufficient argument to say that members opposite oppose a Bill because there is something in it for the A.L.P., that could explain the attitude of the Playford Government over many years, because obviously there was something in electoral reform for the A.L.P. in view of the discrimination my Party suffered during those years.

Thirdly, this was said to be a first step to a first past the post system. The fourth criticism was that there were distinct advantages in preferential voting, the fifth was that we were putting the clock back, and the sixth complaint was that we would confuse the electors. The final criticism was that it would be impossible for the minor Parties to achieve success. Regarding the first criticism, there will be far less difference between the ballot-papers than the member Kavel would make out, because under the new system for the Legislative Council people cannot vote for each individual candidate. There is not a square alongside each name, but only one alongside each Party list. Although there may be 40 candidates' names on the ballot-paper, there may be only five or six squares to be filled in. Evidence was quoted earlier in relation to the House of Representatives seat of Werriwa, where 12 candidates stood, so that was a Lower House seat in the Commonwealth system that attracted a large number of candidates. It is not impossible that the same thing could happen in a House of Assembly seat in South Australia.

It is not impossible that in some House of Assembly seats there could be more squares to fill in than for the Legislative Council. In those circumstances, I suggest that the case for optional preferential voting for the House of Assembly seat is stronger than it is for the Legislative Council. I leave my friends opposite to consider that there is much less difference between the two voting papers than they would make out, because it is not the number of names on the Upper House voting paper that counts but the number of lists and the number of squares. I would not expect more than six Party lists at the next State election for the Legislative Council, whereas members opposite, particularly in some rural seats, may well expect five or more opponents, but I will deal with that later.

Members opposite expressed the view that there was something in this for the A.L.P. That in itself is not an argument; it is not something which on its own is sufficient to justify criticism of such a measure. As I said earlier, any sort of reasonable electoral reform back in the Playford days had something in it for the A.L.P., but that was no reason for rejecting it in terms of the wider principles of electoral justice. If members opposite think that under this system the A.L.P. how-to-vote card would indicate that the Labor voter should vote "1" and leave the rest blank, they have got another think coming. I would advocate within our Party that in certain electoral districts we should use the preferences, which can still be used under this system, to our own Party's advantage. It is an interesting outcome of the schisms that have occurred on the other side in the past few years that, for the first time in many years, the Labor vote in some of the deeper blue country districts now means something, because, given the ultra-conservative nature of some of those districts, we might reasonably expect that the Labor candidate will not run first or second, but third; therefore, his preferences possibly will come into play.

He could determine the issue as between the Country Party and the Liberal Party in Rocky River, or even possibly as between the Liberal Party and the Liberal Movement in Davenport. I would advocate that my Party should use to the fullest this new position in which it finds itself. That is not an argument for my Party's supporting anything like the first past the post system, where our power to operate in the way I have indicated would be taken away; it is an argument for still being able to use the preferential system in the way other political Parties have used it in the past. One other point was made in this context by the member for Kavel, who quoted figures relating to a Queensland election in which the A.L.P. had got 50 per cent or 51 per cent of the valid votes cast, but more than 66 per cent of the seats. However, he was not able to demonstrate that this disparity arose out of the operation of contingent or optional preferential voting.

Mr. Goldsworthy: The figures quoted proved the point.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: They did not prove the point, because in a full preferential system that same result in terms of the candidates elected could have been obtained. There are two other possible reasons. One, with which we would be familiar in South Australia, is the way in which the boundaries might have been drawn at that time; the other and more important one, which is independent of the way in which the boundaries are drawn and is merely dependent on the fact that we have single-member electorates, is that under any system based on single-member electorates the winning Party gets a bonus. This is mathematically demonstrated in the cube law, which I have mentioned on various occasions, usually in reply to the same sort of assertion as that made by the member for Kavel. I wish he would read articles in the *Australian Journal of History and Politics* by such people as Joan Rydon.

This works whether it is first past the post voting, preferential voting, or optional preferential voting. It merely depends on the fact that one has a system in which in each electoral district there can ultimately be only one winner. One can get the same kind of effect if one scoops marbles out of a barrel and compares the number of marbles with the number of scoops where there is a majority of reds or blues. What the honourable member was trying to illustrate was not illustrated, because other factors obviously operated, rather than the one he talked about, to get that result, and they continue to operate. In any election these days one can expect a bonus effect to go to the winning Party.

The Opposition had to use the argument that this Bill was a stepping stone to first past the post voting, so that members opposite could become completely irrelevant and

criticise a system that we are not advocating. Let us suppose that the policy of the A.L.P. right now is first past the post voting. There is no way in which the Party of which I am a member would be able to implement such a policy without a majority in both Houses. However, once we have that, it does not matter whether it is that system, preferential voting, proportional representation, or whether the ballot-papers are filled out in Sanskrit. If we have the numbers, we can get the policy implemented. So, how can this Bill be a step on the road to first past the post voting? No step is needed: all that is needed is that the Party wishing to implement a certain policy has the numbers in the Parliament to do it.

It is just as easy, once this system comes in, to go back to the system we are replacing as it is to go to another system. Of course, it was necessary that the Opposition use this spurious argument and go on with all the waffle about the first past the post system, which is completely irrelevant. The next point made by the Opposition was that there were distinct advantages in preferential voting. I suggest that those advantages still reside in the system we are advocating in this Bill. If a Party wants to advise its supporters to use their preferences, it will issue how-to-vote cards accordingly, and most of its supporters will vote in that way; if they do not, it is a vote of no confidence in the Party that they are otherwise supporting, because they are not supporting it to the utmost. This applies to a minor Party or a major Party.

In most cases, when electors mark all the preferences on their ballot-papers, they are marking preferences that will never be counted or inspected. The electors are merely going through an empty exercise so that they will cast a valid vote. I have always done this. The person for whom I have voted has always run first or second; usually first. I have never been in a situation where the person for whom I have voted has run third. So, for all those years when I have cast preferences they have never been counted. The only reason for marking third and fourth preferences on the ballot-paper is that the vote will not be wasted.

We can turn to the last State election and consider the majority of seats and see the way in which most people did not have their preferences counted. The result in the Mawson District is dear to my heart. A candidate named Gater, representing the Social Credit Party, received 841 votes; a candidate named Hopgood, representing the A.L.P., received 13 812 votes; and a candidate named Scott (we were never sure whether he represented the Liberal Movement or the Liberal Party, but they were almost the same in those days) received 7 786 votes. No preferences had to be counted because Hopgood got an absolute majority on the first count, so preferences were a waste of time. Further, when the people entered the polling booth they knew that the only people who had a hope of getting their preferences counted were the people who gave their first preference to Gater. If the contest between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party had been closer, only the few people who voted for Gater would have had their preferences allocated.

The same kind of situation applied to some other seats, even where preferences were allocated. For example, in the Rocky River District 9 317 valid votes were cast, and the second preferences did not have to be counted on more than 7 000 ballot-papers. It was only the preferences of Mr. Smith, representing the Labor Party, that had to be distributed. Under the system we are advocating, it would still be possible for the Labor Party in the Rocky River District to issue a how-to-vote card instructing its supporters to allocate preferences to the full to decide the issue between Mr. Venning and whoever represented the Country Party or another Party. The argument about putting the clock back does not hold water. I do not see how chronology comes into the matter in any way.

The Hon. L. J. King: It is a strange argument, coming from members opposite.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: It is a strange argument. The member for Kavel was able to show that in certain limiting cases, under optional preferential voting, a person might still get elected with less than 50 per cent of the ultimate preferences. That is a funny argument from a Party that has advocated a system under which a person can be elected by only 10 per cent of the people on the roll; I am talking about voluntary voting, of course. Under the Queensland system, the person elected still was elected with the overall approval of those people who sought to use their option to use their preferences to the full. Some people did not seek to exercise that option. It was their freedom to do so, and that is what this Bill seeks to achieve.

I think I can quote the member for Torrens almost verbatim; he said that under the proposed system it would be impossible for minor Parties to achieve success. I assume that by referring to achieving success he means that a minor Party gets one of its members elected; for example, the member for Flinders and the two Liberal Movement members in this place. The minor Party, of course, gets its members elected if it has a reasonable level of first preference support. Without that reasonable level, it simply does not stand a show. Of course, it would still be possible for a Liberal Movement candidate, a Country Party candidate or a candidate of another minor Party, provided there was a reasonable measure of first preference support, to be elected to this place, possibly on Labor Party preferences. So, I do not see that that is a point at all.

It could be argued, of course, that it lessens the bargaining capacity of the minor Party to decide the issue among the major Parties, but this arises only if the supporters of the minor Party refuse to follow their how-to-vote card to the letter. I see this as a matter between the minor Party and its own supporters, and it is a matter into which the Statutes of this State should not intrude. It may come as a surprise to members opposite to know that a form of optional preferential voting existed in South Australia for some years. It was not quite the same system as we are advocating here, but it existed back in the days of multi-member electorates, and it provided that where, for example, there was a three-member electorate a person had only to mark his ballot-paper down to No. 7 (that is, twice the number of vacancies up for grabs, plus one). That operated in the 1930 and 1933 elections and it was abandoned when a Liberal Government in the mid-1930's introduced single-member electorates. South Australia did not go to rack and ruin under that system.

I concede that that is not quite the same system as we are advocating here, but neither is the system that operated in Queensland the same as the system that we are advocating here, as is suggested by the member for Kavel. If the honourable member is a little sceptical (I should like to thank the member for Mitchell for some rapid research he undertook during the adjournment on this matter) I shall refer to the following passage from the 1940 Queensland Year Book:

> Voting is compulsory; and "contingent voting" is allowed, but is not compulsory. Under this system, if more than two candidates are standing for election in a district, and no candidate obtains an absolute majority of primary votes, all candidates, except the two with the greatest number of votes, are considered defeated.

That is not the system that we are advocating here. Under this system it is still possible for a candidate three or four down after the first preferences are counted to get up and win if he can get enough preferences from the remaining candidates below him on the first preference tally. However, we have it here in black and white (and I assume that the writer of this 1940 Queensland Year Book did not get his facts wrong) that all candidates except the first two were eliminated, and then such preferences as were indicated would have gone only to those candidates who were first and second on the list. That could be in part the source of the anomaly that the member for Kavel was dealing with.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You don't refute it, do you?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I have already been over it once and, if the honourable member wants me to take a few more minutes of the time of the House, that is his business.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I know what I meant, but you don't.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The honourable member meant that the first past the post system operated a bit light because in certain limited cases it was possible for a person to be elected with less than 50 per cent of the ultimately preferred vote. The point I am making is that the person still has more than 50 per cent of the ultimately preferred vote of those voters who were willing to exercise their rights to the fullest. What we are advocating is that people should have the freedom to operate their rights to the fullest if they want to do so, or to a more limited extent if they also want to do so. That is the point that is dealt with by this Bill, and it is different from compulsory voting or voluntary voting.

We are talking about compulsory turn-out and, once a voter gets the voting paper, what he does with it is his own business. Optional preferential voting is along the lines of the philosophy I have outlined. Having eliminated the bad features of voluntary turnout, one should then allow the person the maximum freedom of action to do with the ballot-paper what he will. The important thing about the system that is involved in this Bill is this: there is a broadening of the freedom that is available to the voter. When he gets into the polling booth, he can exercise a valid vote with a figure "1" alongside a candidate's name or go as far down as he wants to go. I have heard as yet no valid argument against the scheme. It has considerable advantages, as I have outlined, for the electors in the polling booth, and that is what we should be concerned about, not simply narrow Party advantage.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): I agree with the Minister of Development and Mines in only one thing he said: that was his last remark, that we should be concerned about the good of the electors and not about narrow Party advantage. From the Minister's own lips it came, because that is exactly what this Bill is all about—narrow Party advantage. This system is being put up by a Labor Government whose credibility and sincerity in this sort of matter are very much open to question. It is certainly most suspect. Many matters have been canvassed. I felt it was a measure of the Government's concern about the passage of this legislation and its desire to justify the legislation in the minds of the people that the Minister expounded on the large amount of work he has recently undertaken.

There is no question in my mind that the system now advanced is a poor system on two major counts. The first count is the system's partial destruction of the preferential system of voting as we have come to accept it. The Minister has said that the preferential system is clumsy and complicated. He then said that in many cases preferences did not have to be counted. I make the point that if any honourable member in this Chamber feels so confident about holding his own seat that he imagines that he will win as a matter of course and that his preferences will never have to be counted, then I can say only, "God help him," because he is not in touch with his electorate.

Every Parliamentarian worth his salt knows well that he cannot count on being the member of Parliament for his district after the next election until the numbers are up on the board. I should like to think that it is the case, that all honourable members realise this. No honourable member can take anything for granted. The preferential voting system is an entirely fair system. It is called the alternative voting system normally, and alternative voting systems are acknowledged generally as being the fairest way of administering single-member electorate voting systems. I agree with that.

The important thing is what is going to be, or what is, the best system for the people of South Australia in determining who will be their members of Parliament. Nothing that has been said on the other side has convinced me that there is a better system than the preferential system that we now use. It is fair, and gives everyone an opportunity to express a preference. If a man votes for one person, and would like to see someone else representing him if the candidate of first choice is defeated, he has a second choice, and there is no reason why he should not have it. Indeed, systems have been applied where alternative voting has taken place at a second election to determine who is the candidate most preferred by the majority of electors. That cannot possibly apply here; it is far too clumsy; it would not work and, therefore, the preferential system as it has applied here is the best alternative. The Minister said that he did not believe that there was anything in the scheme for the A.L.P., which would if necessary, tailor its how-to-vote cards according to the districts in which they were issued. In other words, the A.L.P. would issue simple how-to-vote cards in simple districts and detailed how-to-vote cards, with preferences fully allotted, in other districts. Obviously, this is a matter of political manipulation, and I believe that that is the reason why this legislation has been introduced.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: What's your argument again?

Dr. TONKIN: By manipulating preferences in a situation where there is more than one candidate the Labor Party hopes that it will be able to gain a maximum electoral advantage either by allocating a full list of preferences or by refraining from doing so, according to the circumstances. If it wishes to have the best of both worlds, it will be able to refrain from putting down the preferences when it suits that Party. On the other hand, if it feels strongly about a particular district it will put down a full list of preferences. The A.L.P. hopes to manipulate the situation where more than one Party on the right side of politics is in the field.

Mr. Langley: On the wrong side of politics.

Dr. TONKIN: "On the right side" is a most appropriate phrase. The A.L.P. hopes to gain some advantage from the fact that people are free to stand for Parliament as Independents or members of smaller Parties or a minority group by manipulating the preferences it will give.

Mr. Langley: What do you say about it?

Dr. TONKIN: I think the Minister put forward the theory that he does not really advocate doing away with full preferential voting, because the A.L.P. does not have the numbers in another place; that was the reason, I believe—

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: Oh, come on!

Dr. TONKIN: I go further and say—

Mr. Payne: You're really desperate.

Dr. TONKIN: The Minister should read *Hansard* in the morning. I have no doubt that, if the Labor Party had the numbers in both Houses of this Parliament, we would be debating not this Bill but a Bill for the complete abolition of the preferential system and the introduction of minority representation voting.

Mr. Millhouse: Will you answer one question? Do you believe in one vote one value?

Dr. TONKIN: Yes, by and large I do as a principle, but it depends on whose definition is used.

Mr. Keneally: What did your friend on your right have to say about it?

Dr. TONKIN: It is a matter of definition. Now that the member for Mitcham has got in his little piece, I will deal with the question of minority Parties. I believe that, if we had a majority of Labor members in both the Upper and Lower Houses, this Bill would be a different Bill, namely, one to introduce first past the post voting.

Mr. Millhouse: Say that again.

Dr. TONKIN: There is no question of that in my mind.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member can deal only with the Bill now before the House, not with supposition.

Dr. TONKIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that some people believe that optional preferential voting would be a disadvantage to minority Parties and to Independents. I do not know for certain whether that would be so, but it is my impression that it would be so. I have been assured by various people to whom I have spoken that it would be a tremendous drawback to minority Parties. Some people have gone so far as to say that it would effectively wipe them out from Parliamentary representation and that it could preclude Independents from being represented in this Parliament. I do not know whether that is true and I think that much analysis would have to be done before anyone could ascertain that; indeed, it might take an election to find out. I, for one, do not want that to happen under the proposed scheme.

If there is any question at all that this proposal will adversely affect minority groups, I for one will not have any part of it, because I believe (and this is Liberal Party philosophy) that minority groups, whether or not we agree with them, have every right to representation and to a fair go; that applies at the ballot box and at elections equally as much as it does anywhere else. I think it was Voltaire (and I do not think that this quote has been used in this debate, but I believe that it will be used again) who said, "I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

The Hon. L. J. King: That's one version of it.

Dr. TONKIN: If the Attorney is as learned as he appears to be, he will know that there is doubt that Voltaire actually said what I have quoted. There is more than one version of it, but the sense is there and it is an important principle.

The Hon. L. J. King: What is its relevance to the Bill?

Dr. TONKIN: If the Bill will have any adverse effect on minority Parties, although it may possibly suit the Labor Party to get rid of them, we, as Liberals, are committed to protecting those minority Parties as far as possible.

The Hon. L. J. King: How will this adverse effect on minority Parties come about? We're hanging on your every word.

Dr. TONKIN: It would be more appropriate if the Attorney told us how it would not come about; that is exactly his job as the Minister in charge of the Bill. I hope that we will have some reasoned argument from him when he replies to the debate.

The Hon. L. J. King: There's another quotation, namely, "He who asserts should prove what he is asserting."

Dr. TONKIN: I have never come across anyone who asserts more frequently or with more conviction than does the Attorney on so little ground.

The SPEAKER: Order! To which clause is the honourable member addressing himself? The honourable member must come back to the Bill, otherwise I will rule him out of order.

Dr. TONKIN: The Minister of Development and Mines said many things which I cannot really think he believes. I do not know whether he was insincere or really believes them, but I think he is far too intelligent to believe the things he said. Nevertheless, my basic objection to the Bill revolves around two points. First, tremendous electoral advantage could be gained by the A.L.P., and it knows that; there is no question that this is so. The fact that the Minister said, "How could this come about?" is unimportant. He must believe the Opposition to be naive if we think there could not be some advantage to the A.L.P. I have outlined the ways in which the preferences can be exploited.

The other point is the matter of minority Parties and Independents, and I still maintain, whatever they may say and whether I agree with them, that I will support their existence and do everything I can to ensure that they have a fair deal both at the polls and, if necessary, in this House.

Mr. BLACKER (Flinders): I stress my strong opposition to the Bill and I am concerned that the Government should expect a measure of this kind to be passed in this House within a week of its introduction. Any matter that concerns the electoral system is serious and applies to everyone in the State. It is not just a sectional matter. The people may not be fully conversant with its implications. It is a complex matter and possibly the people will never know the full effects of it. The fact that the Bill was introduced last Wednesday and that the Government expects it to pass this House this evening shows the Government's contempt for the general public.

The measure has been introduced on the premise that it will simplify the electoral system, but I cannot agree with that. I go so far as to say that it is a reflection on the people to put this alteration to the electoral Act before them on that basis. One cannot draw a comparison between matters such as triellas, fourtrellas and quinellas in horse-racing and a Bill such as the one before us. I cannot agree that we should pass this Bill merely for the sake of simplicity.

The measure does away with the principle of preferential voting and with the effectiveness that that system has in the obtaining of the true will of the people. The present system ensures that the person elected is the one whom most people want to elect. It is more to the point to say that it ensures that the persons not elected are those least wanted by the people, but the new system will allow people not desired by the majority to be elected. The

fact that the Minister has included clause 4, which provides for minority election, shows that anomalies will arise in the application of the legislation.

Much has been said about the right of the individual to cast a voluntary vote. I consider that every person is obliged to vote. It is a necessary part of the Australian way of life that everyone should accept his responsibility in electoral matters. Anyone who opts out of that responsibility does not cast an intelligent vote and in many ways could be regarded as being a parasite on the community.

Much has been said about the Government's intentions in introducing the Bill. Naturally, the Bill is to the Government's advantage. The Government's objective is to polarise the electorate. If the Labor Party could do it, it would have a two-Party system, with Socialists on one side and non-Socialists on the other. The Labor Party knows that that would be to its advantage, because the non-Socialist spectrum of the voting population is widespread, extending from the outer rural areas to the inner metropolitan area and, in some cases, to industrial areas. That makes it difficult to get all those people together under one banner. The Labor Party is denying the people the right of choice.

When there is a polarised vote, with Socialist and non-Socialist votes, the two candidates almost always are endorsed by the respective Parties. A voter has no choice of the individual candidate: he has only a choice of Socialism or non-Socialism, and individual personalities and abilities go by the board. The Government knows that this Bill gives it more control over the electoral system. The only two State Labor Governments in Australia have gained control against a single non-Socialist Party. If a similar position arose in the other States, it would be fairly certain that the Labor Party would have a decided advantage and a good chance of gaining Government there.

It has been stated that there will be no record of the informal vote. Sometimes this can be embarrassing, and it would be more so in a two-Party contest. Sometimes the informal vote is massive when only Socialist and non-Socialist candidates stand. That massive informal vote usually is a protest vote by people who are not pleased about either Party.

The Hon. L. J. King: Why will the informal vote not be recorded?

Mr. BLACKER: It will not be recorded to the extent of being counted. Perhaps I should go the other way and say that people will be disfranchised. The disfranchised vote would be eliminated and, therefore, could not be taken into the count. In many ways, the protest vote would be lost through the informal vote not coming through the count.

I know of no way in which the Bill can be justified. It is a blatant abuse of the proven system that we have known for many years; it is not an alternative system of voting. Any change should be one for the better and one that ensures that the person elected is supported by the absolute majority of voters.

The devious nature of the Minister's intention is indicated clearly by his desire to amend the Act to provide for minority election. The biggest admission of the inadequacy of the Bill is the provision in clause 4 which provides for minority support to be sufficient to elect a member. Any change to electoral legislation must be made with an objective, and I consider that this proposal is incomplete and cannot be justified in any way. It is only a part measure, and it seems to me to be a stepping stone for something more obnoxious.

If a voluntary preferential system is to be implemented, we must have either multiple member districts or voluntary voting. It is possible for a voluntary preferential system to complement those systems, but a system of voluntary preferences alone is abusing the system that we have had. I am pleased that Opposition members have been unanimously opposed to the Bill. I was afraid that this might not be the case all round. Some of the attitudes that have been expressed in previous elections regarding minority Parties have not been all that favourable, and I am grateful that the Liberal Party has approached the matter in this way. I hope this attitude carries through to another place.

Mr. Millhouse: What they have said about the Country Party in the last few weeks has been fairly unkind.

Mr. BLACKER: I realise that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BLACKER: At least the Country Party and the Liberal Party will be presenting a united approach in their opposition to the Bill, mainly because their members do not know what is to follow and whether this is merely the stepping stone towards the first past the post system. If it is, it should be rejected at any price. Naturally, the effects of this type of voting have been described in many ways in the House, and I have used the same figures in the House previously when describing the system. It is well known that, if five persons are contesting an election, a candidate could be elected with only a 21 per cent vote. Therefore, 79 per cent of the people could have voted against the successful candidate. If there is a 50-seat House, and 26 members are needed to form a Government, it would be possible to have only a 10·4 per cent effective vote to create a Government. As the system could be abused to that extent, it must be rejected at all costs. During the debate, some cynical remarks emanated from the Government benches, it being suggested that the Country Party is a Socialist Party. I categorically deny that.

The Hon. L. J. King: It is not altogether against Government intervention.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders must speak to the Bill. There is nothing in this Bill about Parties being Socialist Parties or otherwise.

Mr. BLACKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker: the reference to "Government intervention" has come about solely because of organised marketing within producer fields. That had to be refuted.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders must speak to the Bill.

Mr. BLACKER: I believe that under the voluntary preference system a considerable proportion of voters will be disfranchised. This will happen because voters are not fully aware of the consequences of their actions. The Minister has admitted that he has introduced the Bill for the sake of simplicity, thereby admitting that in the past many voters have gone to the polls not fully understanding their obligations under the electoral system. If voters fail to lodge a preference vote, their votes will be disfranchised. Everyone has a responsibility in this matter, and it is up to all political Parties to tell voters that, if they want their votes to remain in the count, they must lodge a preference vote. Although this has been played down very much by

the Minister of Development and Mines, it is an important matter which plays a significant part in many decisions that are made in relation to the State electoral system.

The Minister referred repeatedly to Party politics. Although his facts and figures may in some cases have been correct, he got away completely from the right of the individual and smaller groups to contest elections. This is narrowing the field and taking away certain rights from individuals. After all, every eligible voter in South Australia is entitled to stand for election if he so desires. Should he be forced to join a political Party if he has political ambitions? I do not think he should, and this is something that the Minister overlooked and certainly played down in his speech. Many of the instances to which he referred were accurate only while major political Parties were an influencing factor. However, he got away completely from the right of the voter to assess his candidate not on the political Party to which he belongs but rather on his ability.

The Minister said that the proposed system is designed to broaden the freedom of the voter. I think it will have the reverse effect. Indeed, it will narrow the voter's freedom and he will be obliged to vote for an established Party. The effectiveness of this whole scheme will depend on the political Parties educating the public. This throws the responsibility back on individual Parties and, if an Independent wants to contest an election, he will be obliged to do his share towards educating the public. This would be completely unnecessary if the present system was maintained. That it is necessary for political Parties to educate the public is an admission that many voters will be disfranchised.

This is only a short Bill, clause 2 of which contains the machinery for the franchise of electors to be changed for the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly. Clause 3 deals with the voter's obligations in relation to allocation of preferences, and clause 4 relates to minority elections. This is a dangerous provision and an admission of the Bill's shortcomings. Indeed, it is an admission that it is acceptable, in the Government's eyes, to have a candidate elected on a minority vote. I oppose the Bill.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): This Bill is designed to perpetuate Labor Party minority rule in this State and in the rest of the country, and anyone who believes in democracy and in a fair go and justice could not support this type of legislation. The Attorney had the gall to claim that the Bill will simplify the procedure. It will simplify the procedure solely to perpetuate Labor minority rule! That is its aim.

Mr. Burdon: Your Party was in power with a minority vote for years.

Mr. GUNN: The member for Mount Gambier ought to be the last to speak in this respect: he is supporting a course of action that his colleagues put into practice in Queensland. Members know what the Government has in mind in connection with this Bill: it wants to get its foot in the door so that it can bring in its plans regarding the first past the post voting system. That is part of its programme.

Mr. Keneally: That's not so.

Mr. GUNN: It is no good the member for Stuart interjecting. He should get to his feet and show the people that he does not believe in democracy or that people should have a fair go. This is a short and nasty Bill, whose provisions the Opposition will oppose now and on any future occasion when they are introduced.

Mr. Keneally: Don't you like the voluntary aspects?

Mr. GUNN: The honourable member can make his own speech. If he is not allowed to do so, that is his fault for belonging to the Labor Party. Before long, the people of the State will not be allowed to vote for the candidate of their choice.

Mr. Burdon: Have you been talking to Eric Butler?

Mr. GUNN: The honourable member has been associated for too long with his red mates down at the Trades and Labor Council.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the Bill about the Trades and Labor Council. The honourable member must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. GUNN: We know the depths to which the Labor Party will sink to try to entrench itself in power. It is determined to split up the anti-Socialist forces. The member for Mitchell is trying to promote the Country Party in my district. Obviously, members opposite have many more dirty tricks up their sleeve.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must come back to this Bill.

Mr. GUNN: I thought I had never left it.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is for the Chair to decide.

Mr. GUNN: It will be interesting to hear what the member for Mitcham says in this debate, having regard to the interjections he made while the member for Kavel was speaking.

Mr. Millhouse: If you are patient, you will hear what I have to say.

Mr. GUNN: I will also be interested to hear what the member for Goyder thinks of the Bill. We know that the member for Mitcham wants to discriminate against country people. Does the member for Goyder support the principle of one vote one value? Does he want to destroy the country representation in this State?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not continually call the honourable member to order. If he continues to totally disregard calls to order, that is an infringement of Standing Orders, and the honourable member will have to suffer the consequences. The honourable member must speak to the Bill before the House.

Mr. GUNN: I was only making a passing reference to the policy of the Labor Party on electoral matters. I thought this was an opportune occasion to refer to this, because the Labor Party policy of one vote one value, which I understand the members for Mitcham and Goyder support, is undemocratic.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is not speaking to the Bill; apparently he intends to disregard my calls to order. Consequently, I warn him.

Mr. GUNN: I believe that the Labor Party has looked at its electoral prospects in this State and, seeing that there are three anti-Socialist Parties in the State, has suddenly decided to maximise its own minority support, thus perpetuating itself in office. Finding the forces opposing Socialism unfortunately divided, the Government has decided to exploit the situation. It is not concerned about the will of the people; there is no provision for democracy in the Bill. If the Bill passes, John Citizen will virtually be denied the chance of ever being elected to Parliament, unless he belongs to one of the major Parties. Anyone who supports democracy cannot support such a situation. Before long, people such as the member for Spence

will advocate that, because the Labor Party has been elected a couple of times, there should be only one political Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must come back to the Bill.

Mr. GUNN: I thought those remarks were completely in line with the Bill.

The SPEAKER: That is for the Chair to decide.

Mr. GUNN: Certainly I would not want to contravene your impartial rulings, Mr. Speaker; that would upset me greatly. All people who value the democratic rights of people in this country will be concerned about the provisions of clause 4. In many parts of the world, people suffer under dictatorships or Socialist systems. Many people from those countries have come to Australia. When they see that the Government is willing to include in a Bill a provision such as clause 4, it will strike fear into their hearts. Government members sit weakly behind their Ministers, not game to object, because they fear what will happen to their endorsement. Under the Bill they will be able to stay in Parliament for virtually as long as people unfortunately vote for the Labor Party, because minority groups will not have a chance to have candidates elected. The Bill will practically destroy the chance of an Independent to be elected. Although I do not particularly approve of Independents, I believe they have the right to stand and be elected. I strongly oppose the Bill, hoping it will be dealt with appropriately in another place. I shall be interested to hear what the member for Goyder says about the Bill.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): I think the word "democracy" has been loosely used. To me, democracy means individual freedom. We do not have much of it in the world today. We are getting more and more governed by bureaucrats and getting away from the way of life I enjoyed when I was young. I have sympathy for the young in the future, as they will be hide-bound more and more. Believing in individual freedom, I believe in voluntary voting. Indications in Gallup polls are that people in Australia believe in having compulsory voting. That is against my opinion. I think we must look for individual freedom as much as possible. I believe it is inconsistent to tell people to vote and then turn around and make it voluntary how they mark their cards. It is interesting that a Party that believes in compulsion in every possible way in this case talks about individual freedom when that is foreign to its way of thinking in Government.

The decision I make is that I believe in individual freedom and the right of a person who votes, whether he puts in one mark or goes the whole hog; that is what I believe. Can you be consistent in this view if you also advocate compulsory voting? I think there has been much tripe talked this evening. I know our education system is failing today, but surely we have a system that will educate people how to use the preferential system. I know it worries me when I go to a school. This happened to me only a fortnight ago. I visited a high school, and a group of students was drawing blue rings and putting paint around the outside. Whether or not they were imitating *Blue Poles*, I do not know. On the following Saturday night I watched *It's Academic*, and a child was asked how many items costing 31c could be bought for $2·17. The answer was given as five, and that same answer was given by every child except one. They were five-second questions, and the children had to make snap decisions. When they did not have time to count on their fingers they accidentally got the right answer. Surely, if we have any faith in democracy and in our system of education, people in future must know what they are about.

The floating voter used to be an ignorant chap who wanted the best for himself, but the floating voter nowadays has sufficient intelligence to assess the position; he will decide future elections. However, I have still got enough faith in human nature to think that they will do what is fair and honest for everyone. My idea of fairness and honesty is that people should have a right to choose how they will mark their ballot-paper.

I am probably one of the most individualistic persons in this House. In the middle of my course through Party politics, I began to go along with the group, but now I remain myself, as I said I would during the first fortnight I was here. Many years ago I stood (accidentally) as an Independent Liberal.

I believe we would be better off with a group of individuals and Independents in Parliament. I could pick a Cabinet from either side of the House that would be much better than the present Cabinet. The longer one lives, the more one finds out that, if the world is to survive, people must be willing to sit around the table and talk to each other. It is no good having mavericks who want to do everything their way, irrespective of what the majority wants. Should we encourage such a group to come into Parliament? I am a one-eyed country person, although I worked in the city when I was young and spent my youth here. I would not have missed those years. I cannot see any future for those who want to be in a group and to represent a group. We have to get away from the thought that we are here to represent a group.

We are here to represent people with the same type of philosophy, those who believe in private ownership and encouragement to those who are willing to work. We have the other side, of course, the people who want to hand out the cake before it is baked, and the cake gets less and less and is unpalatable. Surely, those who believe in one way of thinking should be in one Party, thrashing out their views in the Party room. I get a hell of a surprise when I win a vote in the Party room, but ultimately, through talking logically, the idea gradually sinks through, and people come around to that way of thinking. They get damaged in the process through not following my advice, and they get kicked around, but this is where people must get together. It is no good coming here and saying, "I represent a country Party—"

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are discussing optional preference voting, and I do not think the honourable member is addressing his remarks to the Bill under discussion. I ask him to confine his remarks to the Bill. The honourable member for Heysen.

Mr. McANANEY: I have listened to five speakers, and they all got on to the subject—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not concerned with what the previous five speakers had to say. I am concerned with the present speaker, and I ask the member for Heysen to address his remarks to the Bill before the House. The honourable member for Heysen.

Mr. McANANEY: The longer I stand here, the more I am amazed at some of the utterances I hear. Coming from a race that believes in consistency and fair play, I am becoming more and more doubtful. Speaking to the Bill, I believe 100 per cent in voluntary voting. It is the only scientific method of voting that gives a result. I believe in individual freedom, and I do not know why we should take away the freedom of a person to make his own decision in marking his ballot-paper. On the other

hand, he is compelled to vote. Can we be logical and still support both ways of thinking? We have already in this State a system of voting for the Upper House in which preferential voting has been eliminated. The sooner we can get back to a sound voting system the better it will be for the State, and we will get fair representatation.

I cannot see how the provisions introduced in this Bill could be deemed unfair in any way. One can try to assess what might happen to each Party, and undoubtedly in five or six electoral districts (or in six or seven elections) one Party will be able to dictate what happens, but that can be done even under our present system. I think this will mean that those in the minor Parties will have to decide whether they want to be members of a team fighting against a philosophy they disagree with or whether they want to go their own separate ways; whether they want to be statesmen and part of a Party rather than politicians with a parochial attitude. That occurs in Parties as well, but we are not arguing about that. I have not seen any logical case put up tonight (other than the one I have put up by way of logical argument) as to why I should not support this Bill.

In sitting down, I protest that I was prevented from discussing what had been discussed earlier in this debate. To me, that is very regrettable and it does not reflect a good Parliament or a good Government. Surely, when we get up to speak we can all have the same rights and privileges, and I stand here and say that I strongly object to the attempt made tonight to tell me to get back to the Bill when I had not wandered half as far from it as other people had done.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham): First of all, I should like to let the member for Mallee and other members know that, in speaking, I am speaking for the Liberal Movement in this place, and the views I am about to express are the views of the member for Goyder as well as my own. I may say that when I first made my notes for this debate I started by writing, "Surprised that every member on the Government side is not smiling all over his face". But that note was written before the debate really got under way; I think the Leader of the Opposition was speaking then. Subsequently, that note really became superfluous because, as successive Liberal Party members spoke, Government members were smiling all over their faces at the rubbish being talked by members sitting in front of me.

Mr. Wardle: What about—

Mr. MILLHOUSE: If the honourable member contributes to the debate, I hope he will be able to put forward arguments that are more constructive than those put forward so far by his colleagues. The debate so far has been entirely fatuous. It is obvious that a Bill such as this had to come into Parliament, introduced by the present Government. The Government would be foolish if it did not seek to take advantage of the fact that there are three Parties represented on this side of the House; that is, on the side of politics opposite to the Government. I have been expecting a Bill such as this to come in, because the Government is naturally out to capitalise on the divisions that we see on this side of politics, and the Government would be foolish if it did not do it. I do not blame the Government for doing that; it is part of politics. The only thing I blame the Government for is not being honest enough to say straight out in this debate that that is why it has introduced this Bill. It is perfectly obvious to everyone, yet we had a very short explanation of this Bill by the Attorney-General and there was not even one suggestion in his speech of what I have referred to.

The Minister of Development and Mines gave a discourse tonight on political history, and he likewise would not make what is so obviously the admission that should be made by a person in his position. It is obvious that the Labor Party has introduced this Bill because it is to its own electoral advantage to do so. One can argue about political theory until the cows come home. One can argue that this Bill is democratic, fair, and workable, but so can one argue that the present system is fair, democratic and workable. After all, it has been working in this State for a very long time.

There are dozens of variations of voting systems that can be claimed to be fair and accurate. I have been in this place long enough now to have heard debates like this probably a dozen times, and everyone can put forward good arguments that favour his own system, but we can never come to any conclusion as to which is best, because there is no conclusion to come to. Most of these systems have their advantages, and some of them have disadvantages as well. None of them is perfect. So, we have been wasting a tremendous amount of time in this House on both sides trying to pick out the virtues of one system rather than another. The fact is that we all, whether we happen to sit in this corner, as do the members for Flinders and Goyder and I, or whether we sit on the Opposition benches or the Government benches, espouse the system that best suits us or our Party. We have all been doing this tonight, and I do not make any apology for doing it.

Let us look at it in another way. We like to regard Australia as a Parliamentary democracy, even though we have compulsory voting; members on the other side would put this in another way and say, "Even though we have preferential voting". The United Kingdom is equally regarded as a Parliamentary democracy, but it has voluntary voting and first past the post voting. These are variations of Parliamentary democracy. As members know, I was in England a few months ago, and I found that the only Party there that had any desire (I remind the member for Glenelg, a former Conservative, of this) for preferential voting was the Liberal Party. Why? Because, under a preferential system, the Liberal Party would have won at the last election, according to Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, about 116 seats. Actually, the Liberal Party won only a dozen or so seats. That is only another way of saying what I have said before, that we all happen to espouse the system that will most favour our own Party. So, let us be clear about this while we are debating this Bill.

The Liberal Movement certainly favours full preferential voting. Our strategy (I have said this several times in this place, and I have said it outside, too) is that there should be in South Australia two Parties from the centre to the right of politics. We believe that that is the best way to maximise our influence and to defeat the Labor Party. We see the two Parties to which I have referred as a Liberal Party and a Country Party; that is what we are working toward in this State. That form of political organisation cannot come to its full effectiveness unless there is full preferential voting, so that we can hopefully (and I look at the member for Flinders here) exchange preferences in those seats where we both put up candidates. The member for Flinders has heard this from me many times before, and so have his Country Party colleagues. There is general agreement between us on the matter.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Is that a fact?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Yes. This leaves the member for Eyre and his Party out of consideration.

Mr. Gunn: Good!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: If the honourable member thinks it is good, I do not mind. That is the way politics in Australia from the centre to the right has been organised in most of the other States and at the Commonwealth level for many years. We want to see it happen here in South Australia, and we therefore do not want to see any change in the full prefentional system. The Australian Labor Party has traditionally been in favour of first past the post voting. Why? Because first past the post voting helps the Labor Party. As a result, the Labor Party is the only Party, or at least the overwhelmingly dominant Party, on the left of the centre of politics in Australia, and it helps it to keep that position and to capitalise on that advantage over the Parties to the centre and the right by having a first past the post system.

I have already referred to the United Kingdom system, where the Liberal Party, the third Party, has been struggling for years, even though in recent elections it has received about 5 000 000 votes. As a rule, first past the post voting favours the Labor Party. It slips sometimes of course when the Party has one of its schisms, as it has had three times in its history when it has split. It does not favour it then. The most noticeable example of this was in Queensland in 1957. The Labor Party had been in office continuously in Queensland, I think, for about 25 years, and it was able to capitalise on the fact that there was a strong Country Party and a strong Liberal Party in that State. Disaster struck when the Labor Party split and there were Queensland Labor Party candidates fighting against Australian Labor Party candidates. The system boomeranged; Labor lost badly; and it has not been in office in Queensland since then. The Labor Party in Queensland is now at its lowest ebb ever. That system does not always work for it.

However, as a general rule, it does. Therefore, one cannot blame that Party for advocating first past the post voting or something like that. As I said, what one can blame it for is its not being honest enough to admit that that is why it advocates that system. The system embodied in this Bill is not first past the post voting, but it is a long step towards that. It is much closer to the situation that is the Labor Party ideal than is the present system.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: Only if the electors choose to mark their first preferences.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I know what the Minister is saying, but there are two elements in this matter at which we should look. The first is how the parties present their how-to-vote cards and whether or not the Labor Party, for example, in Mitcham (when the Minister spoke he said Mawson was close to his heart and Mitcham is close to my heart), presents its how-to-vote card showing preferences. I will say more about that in a moment, when I will forecast what could conceivably be the voting pattern in Mitcham. It depends on how the Labor Party presents its how-to-vote card and whether it merely advocates a vote for the Labor candidate, who hopefully has not yet been picked. The Labor Party candidate will be picked at the June conference. In days gone by it has usually been only two or three weeks before the election that someone has been scraped up to stand for the Labor Party in Mitcham. I do not expect that I shall be as fortunate this time. If the Labor Party does not mark any preferences, if it does not want to differentiate between the Liberal candidate and me, that could be a significant factor in the election. The same is true of the Liberal Party, the Liberal Movement and the Country Party. It could affect the course of the election, because most of our supporters would follow our how-to-vote cards. If the how-to-vote cards do not show a preference, those supporters will not mark a preference either when they mark their individual ballot-papers. That is an important matter, and it is a matter of strategy for the Party. The second point is whether individuals will (and I believe most of them will follow the how-to-vote cards) vote fully and follow a full preference ticket as advocated by both of the Parties, and whether they will bother to mark their preferences when they go into the booth.

I am told from experience in the Irish Republic, where there has been a similar system since independence in 1922, that nearly all voters mark a full preference vote, even though it is voluntary. As I have not checked that information, it may be wrong. Certainly, there is a chance that some of them will not do so and that this will count if there is a close result. So, in both these ways the marking or non-marking of a full preference can make a difference. That is why I say that this system is a long step towards first past the post voting.

Let me take Mitcham as an example (as I promised I would). I might be wildly out in these figures, and I am sure that that will be the hope of members on both sides. Let me for the sake of the argument put this as the possible result of the first preference voting in Mitcham, Millhouse (Liberal Movement) receives 40 per cent of the first preference votes; Callington (Liberal), 25 per cent; Mr. X (A.L.P.), 30 per cent; and an Independent (we have often have an Independent candidate in Mitcham), 5 per cent. If that is something like the voting pattern (and I put it forward for the sake of this example), no candidate has an absolute majority. Obviously, if the Liberal Party voters do not mark their preferences it would be to my advantage (and I know that the Liberal Party is in a dilemma over this now: whether it should mark its preferences in my favour), and that will put me in.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Do you think they will?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I have long since given up making any prophecies about my former colleagues in the Liberal Party. If, on the other hand, they were to give their preferences to the Labor Party candidate, he would win on those figures. It does make a difference to what happens and, if the result were close, even the preferences of the Independent could count. It is conceivable that an Independent might say, "A plague on all your horses; just give me your first preferences and do not bother to mark all the others." In a seat like Mitcham (and I venture to tell the member for Bragg that he will be in a similar situation, although I do not think he will be as well off as I shall be on first preferences) it could make a difference. Therefore, it is something that I do not relish, because I want to see both the other major parties, as they now are numerically in this House, have to mark a preference both in Mitcham and everywhere else.

The problem facing those of us who are opposing the Bill is that we (and I say "we" advisedly, because I did it too) supported a change in the Legislative Council voting system to a system similar to that provided for by the Bill. Of course, that was the thin edge of the wedge, and it has been easy since then for members of the Labor Party to say, "If you are going to support it for the Upper House why do you not support it for the Lower House?" I have to admit that that was a foolish thing to have done.

I hope I have made the position of the Liberal Movement clear. I am glad to see the member for Eyre is here, and I say again what I said in his absence: I am speaking for

both the member for Goyder and myself in this debate. Let me sum up what we think is the proper attitude to take on this Bill. We believe that the present system is well understood in this State. It works, and it is as fair as any other system that can be advanced. It is in accord with our interests as a Party, because our strategy cannot work without it, and we see no reason to change it. Therefore, we oppose the Bill.

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): Unlike the previous speaker, my first reaction on examining the Bill was to look for the principle involved rather than for any potential political gain. Unfortunately, however, in looking at the Bill I could not see any principle involved and, as a Liberal, that has caused me concern. The only possible principle that I could apply was whether the individual had a greater freedom under the proposed voting system than he had under straight preferential voting. Frankly, I think that if a person studies the situation he will see that he gets no additional freedom, because he is still required to vote. I find it interesting that the Minister (the member for Mawson) referred to the increased freedom this person would gain, but he was unwilling to grant this same individual a voluntary vote; that is nothing but hypocrisy.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: That's an entirely different question.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The Government has introduced this measure, and I have turned to the Attorney's second reading explanation to see why it has been introduced, but I could see no principle referred to in the explanation. At no time did the Attorney speak of increased freedom for the voter. He spoke of only one thing: uniformity with the Legislative Council. That, on the surface, appears to be a valid argument because there should be uniformity in the voting systems of the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly. I will take that uniformity to its logical conclusion, because that was the only argument the Government put forward. The Commonwealth system is based on the straight preferential voting, whereas the Legislative Council's system is based on voluntary preferential voting. The House of Assembly's system is based on straight preferences, and I would have thought that the one out of step was the Legislative Council system and that, if it wished to introduce uniformity into the voting pattern, the Government should amend the same Act to ensure that there was straight preferential voting for the Legislative Council.

As the Minister knows, the Commonwealth system still depends entirely on straight preferential voting and, if he is as serious about uniformity as is the Attorney-General, the Government should amend the system for the Legislative Council's voting and leave the system for the House of Assembly as it is now. That would cover the one and only argument the Minister put forward. A similar argument was put forward by the Minister of Development and Mines, who has been the only other Government member to speak. I will now analyse the statements he made. First, the member for Mitcham accused Opposition members of not having raised an argument similar to the one he raised. I thought his argument was one of the most selfish and self-righteous arguments I have ever heard in the House. He said that the only basis on which he would consider the legislation concerned the kind of gain it would give his Party and himself. Most of his speech was devoted to his own seat and the likely effect the legislation would have on it.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: What about Davenport?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The member for Mitcham knew that the legislation would have no effect on the outcome in Davenport, and he put forward his Party's policy as to the need for two Parties right of centre. I found this an incredible argument coming from the member for Mitcham, whose Party has continued to fight the Country Party in every country district in which a by-election has been held. It is for that reason that the member for Goyder is here now. The member for Mitcham, when analysing the situation, said that, if there was a schism within the A.L.P., optional preferential voting would tend to weaken the voting strength of that Party. He talked about the damage that would probably have occurred had this legislation been introduced during the era of the D.L.P. Unfortunately, he showed so much blind self-righteousness that he could not see that the same would apply to the right-of-centre politics.

Two important statements were made in the House today, one by the Minister of Education by way of interjection, and one in the speech of the Minister of Development and Mines. If one studies these statements, one sees the real reason why the legislation has been introduced. I have dealt with and destroyed the only valid argument that has been put by Government members. The argument of the Minister of Education was as follows (and I quote exactly): "We want to keep you in a position where you are for ever trying to achieve an impossible union." That was the Minister's interjection across the Chamber.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I made that interjection in a whimsical way. It was not to be taken seriously.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I wrote it down word for word when it was made; I checked it with the member for Mallee at the time, and he agreed with the wording. That interjection shows clearly that the A.L.P. in this State intends to use the legislation to try to keep three Parties on the Opposition benches and that it will manipulate the optional preferential system any way it can to achieve that aim. The second remark was made by the Minister of Mines and Development, who said, "We will use the preferences on the ballot-paper when there is some benefit for my own Party." That is what the Party opposite claims it has not said, but the Minister clearly indicated exactly how his Party would use the legislation to its own benefit. The Minister of Education told us why the Government was doing it, and the Minister of Mines and Development told us how it was doing it.

Members interjecting:

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I seem to be getting under Government members' skin. We can see that the A.L.P. in this State will occasionally (if the Bill is passed, and I sincerely hope that it will not be passed) allocate preferences. However, it will allocate preferences on its how-to-vote cards only if it thinks that such action might help to continue the split on the Opposition benches and continue to maintain the two minor Parties in the State, namely, the Liberal Movement and the Country Party.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: We'll have to give Mitcham our preference.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: It was interesting to hear the Minister say, "We'll have to give Mitcham our preference because he is our biggest political asset in the State." Again, that shows the A.L.P.'s real motive for introducing the legislation: for political expediency, and for that reason alone. The A.L.P. is trying to maintain the split on the Opposition benches and to maintain itself in Government with the least possible effort on its own part.

The Government has failed to give us a valid reason why the legislation should be passed, and the Attorney-General's efforts in his second reading explanation were pathetic, to say the least. The Attorney-General will realise that after this debate has concluded.

The only reason the Attorney put forward was that of uniformity; but to achieve uniformity we should revert from the new Legislative Council voting system to straight preferential voting. The A.L.P. in this State and the Government of this State have introduced the legislation for their own selfish political reasons—for the lowest possible reason any Government would introduce such legislation. I believe it stinks.

Mr. Nankivell: It's crook.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I agree that Government members could not lie straight in bed, which means that they must be crooked. I oppose the Bill.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General): I will not take long to reply, because there has been little to which to reply. The debate has been extraordinary, because members of the Opposition have debated first past the post voting, voluntary voting, gerrymandered electoral boundaries, the political history of Queensland, and anything and everything except the contents of the Bill.

What the Bill provides is that the preferential system will remain. The change made is simply that a vote is not rendered informal merely by reason of the fact that a voter does not go beyond indicating his first preference. That is the beginning and the end of the matter, but no Opposition member has seen fit to address himself to that question at any time during the debate. I thought the member for Bragg put the matter in a nutshell so far as the Opposition was concerned when he stated quite clearly, "I do not know what the trap is about this Bill, but it was introduced by a Labor Government, and it must have had in mind its own advantage, so we are against it." He put that all in words and he agreed by interjection that that was how he put it. We will be able to read that in *Hansard* tomorrow.

Dr. TONKIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney has attributed to me words that I did not utter by way of interjection, and I ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has raised a point of order. I do not uphold the point of order, because the Attorney stated that he was replying to the remarks made in the debate.

Dr. TONKIN: On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney has stated that he was pleased that I signified agreement by way of interjection across the Chamber, and I did not do that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The statement by the honourable member for Bragg is not a point of order. I do not uphold it as such.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I understood the honourable member to nod to me and say, "That is right." If he did not say that, I misunderstood. At any rate, we can read *Hansard* tomorrow and there will be no question about it then. So much for the attitude adopted by the member for Bragg and the official Opposition.

The member for Mitcham put the point of view of the Liberal Movement bluntly when he said, in effect, "You do not worry about principles in these matters: you look at what is to your own political advantage, and our strategy is to have in this State two non-Labor Parties, the Liberal Movement and the Country Party, and to have an exchange of preferences between them. The compulsory preference system suits that strategy, the optional preferential system does not, so I am against the Bill." So much for the arguments advanced in relation to the Bill.

Nothing that has been said by any member opposite meets the principle on which the Bill is based. The big objection raised by many people to the preferential system is simply that people often say, "It is fair enough that I should be able to indicate a preference if I want to do that, but if I want merely to vote for my candidate and have no preference as between other candidates, why should I be compelled to mark a preference that I do not feel or entertain?" That proposition is difficult to answer.

It seems to me that it is one thing to say to people, "You have a duty, as a citizen, to exercise a vote," but that it is quite another thing to say to them, "Having made your choice of a candidate, you must then go on and make what is an artificial distinction between other candidates for whom you do not want to vote." That is what the Bill and the optional preferential system are all about. The Bill simply provides that a vote is not invalid merely by virtue of the fact that a voter has chosen not to indicate preferences.

One remarkable thing that emerged from the debate was the rather consistent statement by Opposition members that in some way minor Parties would be at a disadvantage as a result of the Bill. To be fair to the member for Bragg, he admitted, when challenged from this side, that he did not know quite how that would happen but he thought that it might be so or that it must be so. No-one else saw fit, despite repeated challenges from this side, to tell us how minor Parties were placed at a disadvantage in this regard.

Every voter, regardless of what Party he votes for, is in the same position. He may indicate his preference, or he may not. He may follow his Party how-to-vote card or he may not. It makes not the slightest difference to the minor Party, any more than to a major Party, whether its voters indicate a preference or whether they follow the how-to-vote card.

If a minor Party candidate can benefit from preferences, it will be not from the preferences of his voters but from the preferences of those who voted for other candidates. If he cannot benefit from preferences and his own preferences have been distributed, it matters nothing to him how many of his supporters have indicated a preference. The suggestion that minor Parties are in some way placed at a disadvantage is untenable. No member has seen fit to explain how this could come about. The Bill is a very simple one.

Dr. Eastick: And a very dangerous one.

The Hon. L. J. KING: The Leader made that remark many times during his speech but, once again, notwithstanding challenges, he did not explain to us what was dangerous about it. I think that in practice, if Parties issue how-to-vote cards indicating preferences, the overwhelming majority of their supporters will follow the how-to-vote card. That is common experience, and I think it will remain under this system as it has existed previously. It will solve the important problem that, where an elector indicates his first preference, that vote will be counted, notwithstanding that he may have made an error in indicating preferences, which in many cases would not be counted anyway.

I put to the member for Bragg that it is highly unlikely that those people who vote for him will ever have their preferences counted. Why should those people be disfranchised if they make a mistake in the allocation of

preferences after they have clearly indicated their preference for him? The suggested system retains all the advantages of the preferential system of voting, and there are advantages attached to it. However, it overcomes the problems associated with the system. The first is the rooted and strong objections that people feel about being compelled to allocate preferences for candidates for whom they have no preference, and, secondly, it overcomes the problem of informal votes being cast merely as a result of voters deliberately not allocating preferences because they are reluctant to do so or as a result of voters making a mistake in allocating those preferences. I suggest to the House that this Bill should be passed.

The time for moving for the adjournment of the House having been extended beyond 10 *p.m.*:

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King (teller), Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Noes (16)—Messrs. Arnold, Blacker, Boundy, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick (teller), Goldsworthy, Gunn, Mathwin, Millhouse, Nankivell, Rodda, Russack, Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells. Noes—Messrs. Allen, Becker, Dean Brown, and Evans.

Majority of 5 for the Ayes.
Second reading thus carried.
In Committee.
Clauses 1 to 3 passed.
Clause 4—"Scrutiny of votes."

Mr. GUNN: This is the obnoxious clause in the Bill. There is no doubt about the Government's philosophy in this respect, as this is a clear attempt by the Government to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of this State.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Eyre must deal with the clause before the Committee, which relates to the scrutiny of votes.

Mr. GUNN: If one examines the matter in depth, one will see that it relates to more than the scrutiny of votes. Indeed, the clause itself needs to be scrutinised, as it is an attempt to deny the people their democratic rights. On the one hand, the Attorney-General has said that preferences will not be counted and, on the other hand, he says that they will be counted. What is the situation? Does the Government want preferences to be counted? The Attorney must tell the people where they stand, because, until now, he has tried to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of this State. This is typical of Labor Party tactics, and in no circumstances can the Attorney justify the arguments he has advanced. He has not given the people or members the correct information and, before anyone can make a constructive decision on this matter, the Attorney must say what is the Labor Party's position on it.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General): I am sorry if I have over-estimated the capacity of the member for Eyre to read and understand the clause. Although it seems clear enough, I will explain it as clearly and as patiently as I can. The effect of the clause is simply that a voter may, if he wishes, indicate a preference or preferences beyond his first preference, or he may refrain from doing so if that is his wish. If his first preference candidate is eliminated from the ballot, his other preferences will be allotted and counted as part of the scrutiny. The clause provides that, if a candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes at any stage of the scrutiny, he shall be declared elected. If no candidate obtains an absolute majority and only two candidates are left in the count, the candidate with the most votes will be declared elected.

Mr. Gunn: Even though he doesn't have an absolute majority?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Of course, because he has a majority of the votes of those people who have elected to make a choice between the two remaining candidates.

Mr. Mathwin: Well that stinks!

Mr. Gunn: It's not democratic.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable Attorney-General.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I know that the honourable member thinks in labels and believes that all problems are solved simply by one's thumping the table and saying that something is not democratic. However, it pays, if possible, for one to try to understand what the provision is.

Mr. Gunn: We understand!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. L. J. KING: It provides that the candidate who obtains the majority of votes of those who have elected to make a choice between the two remaining candidates in the scrutiny is declared elected. What could be fairer than that? Indeed, what other possible system would be open on an optional preference system, I do not know.

Clause passed.
Title.

The CHAIRMAN: An Act to amend the Electoral Act, 1929-1973; the question is "That this be the title of the Bill." For the question say "Aye", against "No". The Ayes have it.

Mr. Gunn: Divide!

While the division bells were ringing:

Mr. GUNN: I seek leave to withdraw my request for a division.

Leave granted; title passed.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General) moved:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

The House divided on the third reading:

Ayes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King (teller), Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Noes (16)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick (teller), Goldsworthy, Mathwin, Millhouse, Nankivell, Rodda, Russack, Venning, and Wardle.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells. Noes—Messrs. Allen, Evans, Gunn, and Tonkin.

Majority of 5 for Ayes.
Third reading thus carried.
Bill passed.

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from March 6. Page 2737.)

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): I support the Bill. In investigating it, I have found that it is designed to speed up and simplify some court procedures. In cases

where the appropriate documents are not ready, the necessity to take them before Chambers will no longer apply, and a delay of up to six months will be averted. I understand that the judges of our Supreme Court have specifically requested this provision, informing the Attorney-General that they would like to see it introduced. These are minor alterations to our legal system that will help to simplify matters. I hope the Attorney is willing to make far greater alterations, with the support of the legal profession and judges, to simplify the entire legal procedure in this State. I remind the Attorney of the attitude so many people are expressing about our legal system. The following statement appeared in an article in today's *Financial Review*:

The legal industry in Australia is under political and public pressure to abandon its nineteenth century cottage industry image and attitudes and emerge from its cocoon of conservatism to more accurately reflect and meet the legal needs of our late twentieth century population.

That is a true reflection of our present legal system, which is slow and cumbersome. As a lawyer, the Attorney recognises its slowness. A case was referred to recently in an article by Stewart Cockburn in the *Advertiser*.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member no doubt is raising interesting questions, but they are unrelated to the subject matter of the Bill. I do not think it is right for the House to be asked to embark on a wide-ranging debate on the whole subject of the administration of justice. The Bill deals with two subject matters, one relating to the time limit for actions, and the other relating to notice before actions. I suggest that the honourable member should be asked to confine his remarks to the Bill.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The main clause of the Bill deals with extending certain periods of limitation. The honourable member's remarks must be confined to the Bill; the debate must not be a full discussion on the law generally.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I was relating my comments to clause 2, in which the limitation has been increased to 12 months except in certain cases outlined in the clause. I believe there are still within this clause severe restrictions that are slowing down our legal procedures. If anything, I am advocating to the Attorney-General that he should in future look at clause 2 and other parts of the Bill, as well as the principal Act, in an effort to speed up legal procedures in this State. I was referring to the article appearing in the *Advertiser* to show the sort of complaint that is so widespread within our community. I cannot see the exact reason for it, because I do not have the knowledge of a lawyer or the knowledge the Attorney has of legal proceedings, but as a person who receives complaints from his constituents—

Mr. Langley: How many?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: A tremendous number. At some stage I shall enlighten the House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Millhouse: A hundred? A thousand?

Members interjecting:

Mr. DEAN BROWN: At some stage I shall enlighten this House—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: —and I include the member for Mitcham, as to details of the complaints.

Mr. Millhouse: How many?

The SPEAKER: Order! Once again, I repeat that this is only an extension of the period of limitation. The honourable member for Davenport.

Members interjecting:

Mr. DEAN BROWN: It is most unfortunate to hear such a barrage of comment coming across the Chamber in the handling of this Bill. It seems that some members of the legal profession are over-reacting to the comments I am making. Coming back to the Bill before the House, I support it and the Liberal Party supports it, because it has been requested by the Supreme Court and because it will simplify the legal procedure within this State. However, it is only a minor simplification, although it is the type of simplification that I hope will be expanded to other areas of the law.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from March 5. Page 2700.)

Mr. NANKIVELL (Mallee): To use the phraseology of a person who introduced a similar Bill into Parliament in 1963, the Act is crook! However, I have no option but to support the Bill, because it makes necessary amendments to legislation at present on our Statute Book relating to the raising of revenue for the Highways Department. The Act is crook because, as we have said many times, it collects a tax that falls on a sectional group in the community.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Bill deals only with certain changes to effect metric conversion. It does not permit the honourable member to debate the Act. He is out of order in attempting to do so.

The SPEAKER: The honourable Minister has raised a point of order which I partially uphold, because there is more in the Bill than metric conversion. The essence of the Bill deals with metric conversion and the remarks must be linked with that portion of it and with certain other limited aspects of the legislation. The whole Act is not open for discussion, however.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Thank you, Sir, for your protection in this matter. As I read the Bill, you are perfectly correct in saying that, whilst the machinery matters are purely those of converting tons and miles to tonnes and kilometres, there is in addition a clause which brings in other people and corporations and which provides that the persons concerned with the management of a corporation may be liable to conviction for offences committed by the corporation. That is an entirely new provision. There is one other clause which has nothing to do with metric conversion; it deals with the increase from £200 to $500 in the maximum penalty. It is in this area that the Bill is crook; it is not only the Act that is crook.

The Bill imposes penalties on a sectional group in the community. As we have argued many times previously, the people comprising that group live outside the radius of the metropolitan area, in the country. The impact of this Bill on those people is an on-cost on everything they bring to their properties or into the country or take from the country to the city by road. It is an on-cost they cannot pass on. This is also what I call a dishonest Bill, in the sense that it invites people to collect their own tax. This is not a fair thing because (let us be honest with ourselves) not everyone is honest.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: It is an honesty tax.

Mr. NANKIVELL: Yes. Does the Minister believe that an honesty tax is a fair tax?

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Aren't you honest with your income tax?

Mr. NANKIVELL: I shall take no notice of the Minister; he is talking about something quite remote from the Bill. My income tax has nothing to do with tax payable in respect of cartage. Now that we have established a principle (that it is possible to impose a fuel tax) it would be much better and fairer if this tax were to be imposed as a 2c a gallon tax on fuel, which would raise as much money. It would equitably distribute the tax and it would be a much fairer system than the one with which we are confronted in this Act, as amended by the Bill. I support the amendments, but with great reservations, because I do not like the Bill. It is crook.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I am amazed that this Bill should have been introduced when the committee set up by the Minister of Transport has completed its report on road maintenance charges, but Cabinet has not yet made a decision on the matter.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That is a deliberate untruth.

Mr. VENNING: In reply to a question from me on this matter, the Minister said that the Flint committee had completed its investigation into road maintenance charges, and the matter was before Cabinet. It was expected that the report would have been presented to the House by the end of the month, yet we are debating this Bill tonight. True, the Bill makes a metric conversion, but it also brings in another 250 road users. So, the scope of the legislation is widened. No-one liked the principal Act in the first place.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Who introduced it?

Mr. VENNING: I am amazed that we should have to consider this Bill when we are all hoping that the Flint report will recommend that road maintenance charges be abolished. People throughout the State are awaiting the report and the Minister's statement on it. When the petrol tax was introduced it was thought that road maintenance charges would be phased out. Actually, the total revenue from those charges will be increased, because more road users have been brought into the net. I support the amendments to the principal Act, and I look forward to the Flint report in the hope that the Government will honour its promise to phase out the charges.

Mr. BLACKER (Flinders): I regret that this Bill is not in accordance with the undertakings given to this House by the Minister previously. The following was one of the terms of reference of the Flint committee:

To consider the operation of the Road Maintenence (Contribution) Act and its possible replacement by a more equitable and convenient system for the collection of road maintenance charges.

This Bill continues the old system. In view of the fact that the Statutes are being reprinted, it can be assumed that the Minister has no intention of replacing the tax with an alternative tax. Consequently, I am obliged to oppose this provision, because of its inequality as regards the transport industry, which already is faced with three other forms of taxation, the fuel tax—

The SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the honourable member for Flinders that this debate is limited. It does not deal with the overall road maintenance tax: it deals only with certain sections of the principal Act. The discussion must therefore be limited to the provisions involved in the Bill.

Mr. BLACKER: I have made clear my opposition to the provision to which I have referred. I will have to support the change to the metric system. However, I point out that the penalty is being changed from £200 to $500; I question the effectiveness of this penalty. Many people have been brought before the courts. It has already been said that this is an honesty tax. People who are honest contribute toward the road maintenance scheme, but many people evade the tax through various means best known to themselves. Unfortunately, this means that some people who should be paying the road maintenance tax are evading the issue and putting a greater burden on other road users. The Bill brings in greater responsibilities for corporate bodies. The adoption of ·17c for each tonne kilometre involves a minor increase above one-third of a cent for each ton mile.

Mr. Nankivell: Really, it is an increase from ·16c to ·17c.

Mr. BLACKER: This is quite an increase when it is remembered that there is a gross revenue of nearly $4 000 000 throughout the State. I support the metric conversion.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): The principal Act is a very vexed subject. One could say many things about it, particularly to the Minister of Works. In 1965 the Labor Party promised to abolish the tax on Eyre Peninsula, but it never carried out that promise.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Why?

Mr. GUNN: Before it made the promise, the Labor Party knew—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Eyre is out of order.

Mr. GUNN: I will not debate that.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member will not have the opportunity. It would be out of order.

Mr GUNN: The Government is experiencing much trouble in collecting the tax. The Auditor-General states that only 70 per cent of the tax due is being collected. If the tax cannot be enforced, it is bad and it ought to be abolished. Further, we as a Government will abolish it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: In what year? You can make wild statements when you have no hope of getting into Government.

Mr. GUNN: It is unfortunate that this measure has to be discussed, because this increase in rates will have a serious effect in my district. People in my district live hundreds of miles from the metropolitan area and they are already paying an extra 18c a gallon for petrol. This further increase will add to the cost of the goods they have to purchase. If we are to have a tax, it ought to be fair and it ought to be of such a nature that it can be collected. There is no reason why we should have this tax. The Labor Party supported its introduction, but I never did. I remember the great debates that took place across South Australia when it was introduced, and the member for Flinders remembers those debates, too. They must have assisted his Party to get off the ground, but I will not debate that matter. I sincerely hope that the provisions of this Bill apply for only a limited period. I have to grudgingly support this Bill although I do not like as a matter of principle the tax it imposes. However, the life of the Act will be limited until the next election when the

Government is thrown out of office by the people. The Act will then get its just desserts and the situation will be rectified.

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): With great reluctance I support this Bill, but I fully support the comments made by the member for Mallee, the member for Eyre and other members on this side. The tax levied under the Bill is iniquitous and the quicker it is abolished the better. Clause 4 increases the penalties in the principal Act. The penalties applicable have been increased only marginally yet, according to the Auditor-General in his 1971-72 report, it is estimated that less than 70 per cent of all of the amounts due under this tax are collected. I ask the Minister and the Government whether there is any point in continuing the levying of a tax most of which is not collected by the Government. It is unfair to continue to levy that tax, which some people are paying and which most people are not paying. True, it is difficult to catch the people not paying the tax, but we should also look at another aspect, namely the amount the Government is trying to obtain from companies in liquidation.

Late last year the *Advertiser* carried an article indicating the legal procedure than can be adopted in an attempt to evade paying this tax. By forming a series of companies and putting the trucks in the name of one company and the operation in the name of another company, it is possible to avoid this tax. I understand that a Naracoorte lawyer has established a sophisticated legal procedure under which every six months he bankrupts companies so that those companies can avoid paying road maintenance tax. The Auditor-General's 1974 report shows that the amount the Government is seeking to collect from companies in liquidation and from bankrupt estates is quite large. The Government should examine this matter. These penalties provided are small and, although I am not advocating an increase in penalties, that is one reason why the collection is less than 70 per cent of the total amount due. I believe that the one logical solution to this problem is to abolish or withdraw totally this tax and to remove the original Act as it stands on our Statutes.

Mr. BOUNDY (Goyder): I too, support the Bill with much reluctance. It converts the financial aspects of the legislation to decimal currency, and makes some allowance for inflation by increasing the penalties. It increases the maximum penalty from $400 to $500, and it involves more people in the legislation by covering corporate bodies. It also marginally increases the fees charged, and that cost will naturally have a bearing on the costs of people involved in the carrying of freight. Like many honourable members who have already spoken on this Bill, I oppose the principle of the road maintenance tax. The tax is sectional, discriminatory and all the more objectionable as a result of the imposition late last year of a fuel tax.

As other honourable members have said, this tax grosses for the State the sum of about $4 000 000. I believe it would be much better if a fuel tax were imposed to recoup that sum. It has been stated that 1·1c a gallon would return an equivalent sum to that collected by the road maintenance tax. Further, it is far cheaper and administratively easier to levy a fuel tax than to impose a road maintenance charge. Therefore, I agree that the Road Maintenance Act is bad and should be thrown out at the earliest opportunity.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport): There are a couple of points I must make, principally to protect the integrity of people who are unable to be here to answer for themselves. I refer to the Flint committee. What the member for Rocky River said was completely untrue: the committee has not submitted its report to the Government.

Mr. Gunn: That's what you—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Why someone did not put a muzzle on the member for Eyre when he was born I do not know. We know that they dropped him on his head.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I want the House to understand clearly that the criticisms by innuendo of the Flint committee are completely unjustified and untrue. I refer to a rather wild allegation of the member for Eyre that members opposite as a Government would abolish road maintenance contributions. First, the honourable member can indulge in such luxuries when he has no chance of being in Government. Secondly, even if for some unforeseen reason his Party were in Government, it is unlikely that the member for Eyre would get a portfolio.

Mr. McANANEY: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. What has this to do with the Bill? The Minister is just rambling on and making statements of no consequence whatever.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister is replying to remarks made during the second reading debate in respect of suggestions that this Bill and the tax imposed under it should be abolished.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I do not intend to dwell on this point. I merely want to make the point that the member for Eyre is continually demanding in this House that the Government makes available from the Highways Fund additional sums for local government on the West Coast, yet this evening he has said that he will deprive the Highways Fund of $4 000 000 a year. That is the sort of philosophy we can look forward to from this hypothetical Liberal-Country Party Government, whenever it occurs. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

COAST PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from March 6. Page 2740.)

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): Before making a final decision on the Bill, I want to obtain certain information from the Minister. In his second reading explanation, he said:

It is intended to broaden the powers of the Coast Protection Board, especially regarding the acquisition of, and dealing with, land.

Section 22 (1) of the Coast Protection Act provides:

Where the board is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient for the purpose of execution works authorised under this Act to acquire any part of the coast the board may, with the approval of the Minister, acquire any land constituting or forming part of, that part of the coast.

The Bill includes various clauses dealing with grants to councils for acquisition of land and provides that councils may be required to contribute to the cost of land acquisition. However, the principal Act already prescribes certain powers for the acquisition of land. In his second reading explanation, the Minister also said:

The need for this expansion of the board's existing statutory powers became evident when the board was asked to assist in the acquisition of an area of particularly attractive dune land in the hundred of Koolywurtie on Yorke Peninsula. It appeared that the board had no power to acquire the land except for what could broadly be described as "engineering" reasons.

I accept that it could and would be necessary in certain instances for the board to acquire land or sand dunes for the preservation of the dunes, and the Minister rightly

referred to that provision. The metropolitan coast protection study, which was released in 1974 and which was prepared by Pak-Poy and Associates, at page 62 refers to the board's responsibilities as follows:

(*a*) To protect the coast from erosion, damage, deterioration, pollution and misuse;
(*b*) to restore any part of the coast that has been subjected to erosion, damage, deterioration, pollution or misuse;
(*c*) to develop any part of the coast for the purpose of aesthetic improvement, or for the purpose of rendering that part of the coast more appropriate for the use or enjoyment of those who may resort thereto;
(*d*) to carry or promote research into matters relating towards the protection, restoration or development of the coast.

I do not think that any member would object to that summary regarding the board. The Coast Protection Act refers to all land within the mean high and low-water mark on the seashore at spring tide above and within 100 metres of that mean high-water mark. The crux of the problem is the definition of above and within 100 metres of that mean high-water mark. If one studies the report and the appendix to it one will find that, particularly in my district, the diagrams refer to the mean high-water mark, and the area defined as a foreshore allotment could mean that, in the suburb of West Beach, the first group of allotments facing Seaview Road could be acquired. Even more important, at Glenelg North all the allotments (totalling 62) on the north esplanade could be acquired under the Act.

The deterioration of the coastline along North Glenelg was so bad that, until the rock wall was built there, the road was being undermined. If we accept the guidance of engineers, conservationists, etc., and recognise the mistakes that have been made in the past in allowing properties to be built so close to the foreshore, we could find that this Government or some other Government might, under the Bill, compulsorily acquire all those properties along the esplanade at Glenelg North, ranging from one multi-storey building valued at about $1 000 000 to houses averaging between $80 000 and $150 000.

It would be beyond the realms of possibility for the local council to recommend to the Government that these properties be acquired, because the council would be called on to contribute 50 per cent of the cost. However, it would not be beyond the realms of possibility for a Government (not necessarily this Government) to say to the council, "We want to acquire those properties in order to preserve this area of sand dunes or the coast and you will be required to contribute 50 per cent of the cost. The terms and arrangements of funding it are so-and-so." That is why I am concerned that the legislation may be going too far; yet I cannot see the right answer in drafting amendments to include a buffer clause to ensure that this would not happen. As the Bill stands, it could mean that some time in the future a Government could acquire all these properties, particularly in my district, including valuable properties at West Beach and Glenelg North. I am sure that the member for Glenelg will refer to certain valuable properties in his district. I am taking a narrow viewpoint by considering the legislation only in regard to my own district. The legislation, as regards the mean high-water mark right along the coastline, could mean that most of the properties now built along the whole of the foreshore could be acquired.

Regarding country areas, I find that some of the land is already owned and controlled by various bodies, whereas other land is privately owned. Here again, the board could play havoc by acquiring sand dunes for the purpose of restoring the dunes and removing certain shacks. The legislation could pose a real threat to shack owners on leasehold land or on private property along our foreshore. Those things could happen and they are the doubtful parts of the legislation. The buffer is there in relation to councils, but the board has certain powers and it can use its influence over councils.

The Bill refers to an area on Yorke Peninsula. We are fortunate that we still have some sand dunes in the metropolitan coastal area, and some of these areas will need protection. Much expenditure will be required to preserve them or restore them to their original state. Some damage has been done, but we can hold on to what we have. The Bill makes it easier for the Government to acquire areas that are not under its control.

The sand dunes at West Beach, under the control of the West Beach Reserve Trust, probably are the highest and most neglected in the metropolitan area. Probably their only equal would be those north of Estcourt House, Grange. I consider that the sand dunes at West Beach have been neglected through lack of understanding. Because of various projects planned and being planned and because of lack of finance, the trust could be required to provide funds for restoration. Several hundred metres of piping and fencing were put down to try to grow grass to protect the sand dunes, but the topsoil and the fencing were blown away because the sand dunes were washed away during the winter storms.

The Government or the board must take a firm stand to protect this area, and this applies also to other parts of the metropolitan coastline. One can make fleeting reference here to the large amount of money made available by the Australian Government to acquire the sand dunes at West Lakes. Outside the metropolitan area, there are isolated pockets of sand dunes along thousands of kilometres of the whole foreshore. The Pak-Poy report also refers to such areas that need restoration, particularly the Hallett Cove reserve, which is of outstanding scientific interest. This could be included in any acquisition or property development that the board could have in mind, but at this stage we take it that the board is interested only in sand dunes and that it would not act unless in consultation with councils.

I seek from the Minister an assurance that that is the board's sole intention. If it is not and we cannot get that undertaking, I see a threat to property holders along the whole coastline, particularly in the metropolitan area, and I do not think that my constituents or the constituents of the member for Glenelg would be pleased if they had to live under the threat that the Government or the board could seize their property under some guise of preserving the coastline. That is the danger in the legislation.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): This small Bill contains only four clauses, but the implications, especially those that could be hidden, are big. The Minister, in his second reading explanation, refers to land at Koolywurtie, on Yorke Peninsula. Apparently, that is to blame for the introduction of this Bill. The Minister is shaking his head, but according to his explanation of the Bill—

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: It's not entirely that.

Mr. MATHWIN: The Minister's second reading explanation states:

The need for this expansion of the board's existing statutory powers became evident when the board was asked to assist in the acquisition of an area of particularly

attractive dune land in the hundred of Koolywurtie on Yorke Peninsula. It appeared that the board had no power to acquire the land except for what could be broadly described as "engineering" reasons.

If that is not blaming the Bill on this acquisition, either I have misread the explanation or the Minister's assistant has not written it correctly. It seems to me that the Bill has been framed completely on the side of the board. Local government has not been given fair consideration. The Minister gives a warning of what we can expect to happen in future when he states:

As the board will probably be faced with increasing pressure to acquire parts of the coast for retention as open space or for the preservation of its aesthetic value, it is desirable to amend the Act to allow such acquisition.

Therefore, the Minister is opening the way for other things that could follow. He has not mentioned possible talks with councils before they are involved, yet it has been suggested that they may be involved in large amounts of money. One ought to be wary about this if one wants to protect councils and stop the deterioration of their powers. In another debate, I stated how this Government had been responsible for eroding the powers of councils.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: We've given a lot to them, too.

Mr. MATHWIN: It has been at high cost, in the same way as the Government gave the Opposition the opportunity for grievance debates in this Chamber, and we will not be allowed a grievance debate tonight.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's remarks are out of order. He must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN: I apologise for being sidetracked by the Minister of Development and Mines. If the board in its wisdom decided that it would compulsorily acquire six blocks of land on the esplanade at Glenelg or Somerton (all of which could be worth, say, $500 000), the council could have to pay as much as $250 000, even though it had had no opportunity to budget for that sort of expenditure. Also, if the board decided that a car park should be provided on the esplanade, for which a property could be acquired, the council would have no say in the matter. The people in the district might want a car park not on the esplanade but farther away from it, in an area not under the board's control. However, as the board has control over the foreshore and esplanade, it could tell the Government that it was going to acquire an area for the car park which would be used not by local ratepayers, who would have to meet half its cost, but by the rest of the people in the State who used the foreshore as a playground.

Mr. Goldsworthy: How does this affect Maslin Beach?

Mr. MATHWIN: That could enter into the matter, especially when one considers all the games played down there. The board must submit the matter to councils, and I hope later to move an amendment which will provide for this, and which I hope the Minister will support. Would a large country council be responsible for part of the cost of acquiring a high-priced area, say, 80 km from its office? The Bill will involve local government in much expenditure, and that is not fair. After all, costs are indeed a problem area for councils generally. Why, therefore, does the Government not permit local government to participate in these discussions? This is a disgraceful state of affairs.

The Bill provides that the board shall be able to acquire land and return it to local government. Thereafter, who will have to pay for the maintenance and development costs involved? After all, if a car park was being built, it would involve bitumen, rails, and so on. Who will pay for and control such a park? The Minister does not tell us this in his small second reading explanation, which comprised only two paragraphs. Members are apparently supposed to grasp this information from the air and understand what it is all about.

This is indeed a bad Bill: it is advantageous to the Government but disadvantageous to local government. The whole matter was poorly handled by the Minister when he introduced the Bill and it is a pig in a poke as far as local government is concerned. All the goodies in the Bill are in the hands of the Minister and the board, and councils will have to pay the piper. The Government has the finance, whereas councils will have to borrow money, and that is grossly unfair. After all, if one is talking about acquisition (which is probably the basis of the Bill), councils have the power to acquire land now, anyway. Why, therefore, has the Government seen fit to give the Coast Protection Board this power when councils already have it? Would it not have been better for the Government to tell councils to acquire properties and to say that it would then subsidise them? I suppose this is yet another example of empire building.

Paragraph (*b*) of new section 22 (1), which is inserted by clause 2 (*a*), is indeed a wide provision, and new section 22 (3) (*a*), which is inserted by clause 2 (*b*), is in the board's favour. The Act provides that the board shall meet up to four-fifths of the cost of any works carried out on the foreshore. However, if a property must be acquired (and this can involve just as much money as, if not more money than, any foreshore works that are carried out), the board will meet only half the cost involved. As the Minister knows, finance is the big problem for local government. Under the provisions of the Bill, councils get a raw deal. Under clause 4, they will have no say at all regarding land acquisition by the board; yet they will be obliged to pay half the cost of acquisition. By including that provision in the Bill, the Minister is performing a disservice to local government. I will have more to say about this matter in Committee.

Mr. BOUNDY (Goyder): At first sight, the Bill appears innocent enough, being apparently designed to expand the powers of the Coast Protection Board so that it can acquire land for the benefit of the whole community. If that were the total effect of the measure, we would all support it. However, I believe I must oppose it because of the powers it includes; they are far too wide. I object to new subsection (1) of section 22, which provides:

Where the board is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient to acquire any part of the coast—

(*a*) for the purpose of executing works authorised by this Act;

or

(*b*) for any other purpose consistent with the functions and duties assigned to, or imposed upon, the board under this Act,

the board may, with the approval of the Minister, acquire any land constituting or forming part of, that part of the coast.;

In his second reading explanation, the Minister referred to certain sections of land at Koolywurtie, the area in question being only 16 kilometers from my house. Therefore, I know that this is a particularly attractive stretch of coastline. Some years ago, in conjunction with the board, the council sought to acquire the land because it was one of the few areas of dune land remaining on Yorke Peninsula that was close to its natural state of 100 years ago. Although I am not certain of this, I understand that to this day the holder of the perpetual lease is not aware that his land was

sought to be acquired. The whole matter lapsed because the board did not have power under the Act to acquire the land.

I believe that the provision in the Bill aimed at correcting the anomaly that prevented the acquisition of this land is too sweeping. The only reason why this land is in its present condition is that its owner has been faithful in his stewardship of the area. He has used it mainly during times of drought as an additional area on which to graze his sheep; he has not over-grazed it. He has faithfully controlled vermin and weeds, so that the area is still attractive. I agree that the area is worth acquiring. However, under the provisions of the Bill, the owner will have no say whether he should be allowed to retain the land. Moreover, if the land is acquired, will the board maintain it as faithfully as he has maintained it? Will it keep down the vermin, control the weeds, and so on? Landowners may be pleased to allow land to be acquired for the benefit of the whole community; but under this provision they will have no redress.

The Bill gives the board *carte blanche* to acquire and dispose of whole shack areas along the coastline in my district; even areas of freehold land can be acquired and returned to open space. The board has too much power under the Bill. I also object to new subsection (4) of section 33, which provides:

Where the board, acting in pursuance of its powers under this Act, acquires land within the area of a council the board may recover from the council, as a debt, a contribution determined by the board—

not by the council—

not exceeding one-half of the cost incurred by the board in acquiring the land.

No allowance is made in that provision for dialogue between the board and the local council. I think members will agree that the board is enthusiastic and active. Although I do not suggest that it will exceed its powers, if this provision is passed it will always have the opportunity to do so. Possibly, the board could determine a price for acquiring land that the council in the area would consider too high. However, it will be entirely the decision of the board whether that sum is paid, and the board will be able to recover one-half of the cost from the council, possibly against the wishes of people in that area. Therefore, I believe that councils and owners of coastline areas need protection from the absolute power given the board in the Bill.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I am concerned to see that, in the Bill, the Minister has given the Coast Protection Board the right to acquire land compulsorily. We are reaching the stage where authorities will compete with each other to acquire land across the State, as these acquiring powers are held by the Coast Protection Board, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the State Planning Authority, the Highways Department, the Housing Trust, other Government departments, and local government. It is unfortunate that, under the Bill, landholders have no right of appeal; such a right should be provided. Although a landholder will have the right to go to a valuation court to complain about the amount of compensation, he will have virtually no right to ask an independent group to determine whether it is absolutely necessary for the authority to acquire the land. The only department that should have the right to acquire land compulsorily, without right of challenge, is the Highways Department. The provisions in this Bill will create problems. The Minister may think it is funny—

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: I think your argument is unreasonable.

Mr. GUNN: I have always found the Minister reasonable to deal with, but if one professes to believe in the right of the individual, surely it would not be an unreasonable course of action. I cannot see why people should not have that right. If we look at clause 2 of the Bill, it is obvious that a title over any piece of land is virtually valueless. The Government can step in and take it over. That is quite frightening, because people in this country value the freehold title to a block of land and they should be protected against arbitrary decisions. I have reservations about supporting this clause.

Surely, the learned Attorney would not support the idea of people being evicted from their properties by this board or by any other authority. I cannot see why the board should have such power. Various other Government departments have the necessary powers, and in my opinion local government is the proper body to discharge this function. In my district, as in the district for the member for Flinders, are certain blocks of land with old titles, running into the sea. Is it contemplated that the Coast Protection Board will compulsorily acquire such blocks? I know of three blocks at Streaky Bay, and I think there may be one or two in Port Lincoln. Perhaps the Minister is not aware of the existence of these old titles, but the people who hold them would want to know the future of their land. I hope that the Minister, in reply, will give some indication of how far the board intends to go in acquiring land, and whether it intends to compete with the National Parks and Wild Life Service, which has sufficient power to acquire coastal land in this State without the board entering into this area. These are matters of real concern that need clarification.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): Although my district has no coastline, some of my constituents have properties on the coast. Legislation of this type is necessary, but there is a need for a balance to be struck. I cannot see any provision in the Bill relating to compensation. The Minister should explain what is contemplated. It does affect the coast, but in the past week we have seen a run by a group of people buying shares in a company, Centamin, in connection with a project which I understand is to mine seaweed in St. Vincent Gulf. This will be a new industry, and people are paying good money for shares. If there is to be a wholesale scooping up of seaweed, such action must affect the coast.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I appreciate the points raised by my colleagues and the member for Goyder in questioning some of the powers provided in the Bill. There has been a change of emphasis from that of the principal Act, which is fairly specific regarding the acquisition of land. The board is given certain powers to acquire and reference is made to the Land Acquisition Act. Those of us who know the workings of that Act are aware that, whilst certain procedures can be undertaken by a person evicted by acquisition notice, and whilst he can delay and inquire of the authority as to why such action is to be taken, eventually, under the Land Acquisition Act, the authority can acquire the property and that is the end of it. All the person owning the property can do is to seek compensation, and if he is not satisfied he can take the matter to court. The authority, in the meantime, must lodge a sum of money with the court. Briefly, that is what happens under the Land Acquisition Act.

The Coast Protection Act at present provides that, where the board is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient for the purpose of execution works authorised under the Act to acquire any part of the coast, it may, with the approval of the Minister, acquire any land constituting or forming part of that part of the coast. It is intended now that that provision should be struck out and the expanded wording in the Bill will take its place. The new subsection provides (in part):

Where the Board is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient to acquire any part of the coast—

(*a*) for the purpose of executing works authorised by this Act;

or

(*b*) for any other purpose consistent with the functions and duties assigned to, or imposed upon, the Board under this Act,

I can see the reasoning of the Minister's advisers because the board may want extra powers. However, we are talking about private property, in some cases, and public property in others. The board may, with the approval of the Minister, acquire any land constituting or forming part of that part of the coast. That is different from the wording of the principal Act. New subsection (3) provides (in part):

The Board may, with the approval of the Minister—

(*a*) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land acquired under this section;

That again is new. In this clause we have a new concept that the board, having got the approval of the Minister, can sell any land which it owns or which it has acquired under the previous powers, and it can resell.

Mr. Venning: And call it surplus to requirements.

Mr. COUMBE: It can sell it, lease it, or otherwise dispose of it. What is meant by "otherwise dispose"? This provision, as it stands, is dangerous and it will not work to the benefit of the Coast Protection Board. Rather, it could constitute a real hazard to the landowners involved. I suggest to the Minister that there has been a mistake in drafting this Bill. If we pass it, not only will hardship be done to some people but also before long the Minister may be faced with litigation or he may have to amend the legislation further, I ask the Minister, when he replies to this part of the debate, to direct his attention to the provision to which I have referred. What is done here is to take a provision in the Land Acquisition Act, 1969, which is quite clear, to strike out a provision in the principal Act and insert in lieu thereof a very severe provision. I remind members that, as far as I can see, there is no appeal under the principal Act. There is certainly no appeal under the Land Acquisition Act: all that one can appeal against is the amount of compensation. These are steamroller tactics, but I shall give the Minister the benefit of the doubt and say that that is not his real intention. The row of houses on the esplanade at Henley Beach could be compulsorily acquired. This illustrates my belief that either the Bill has been badly drawn or the Minister has been badly advised. I ask the Minister to try to assuage my doubts in this matter.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL (Minister of Environment and Conservation): The lateness of the hour may have led to some of the foolish speeches that we have heard on the Bill this evening. The principal Act was designed to benefit the community and to ensure the protection of our coastline. The first speaker on this Bill appreciated the work done, but none of the other speakers has referred to the value of this legislation and the work undertaken. Most speakers were not concerned about the welfare of our beaches and the needs of the community; rather, they were concerned about the rights of landholders and the rights of councils. This is regrettable, but it highlights the attitude of members opposite toward most matters affecting the environment. In future, perhaps members should read legislation before they speak on it. The member for Glenelg referred to what he called the tremendous strains that will be put on councils and the imagined threats of expenditure, but he should have argued those matters in 1972, when the original legislation was before this House. Since then, there have been no problems. The councils have been more than pleased with the way in which the legislation has worked.

Mr. Mathwin: You won't always be the Minister.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: That may be so, but the Coast Protection Board will remain as a buffer that will protect our coastline against any Liberal Government that we may be unfortunate enough to have in the future. When a request was made to the board to assist in the acquisition of an area in the Goyder District, the wishes of the people were sought, even though the concern of the member for Goyder was only about an individual in his district, not about the rest of the community. Section 32 (1) of the principal Act provides:

Where a council proposes to carry out works for the protection, restoration or development of any part of the coast and seeks a grant from the board under this section, it shall apply to the board for its approval of the proposed works.

Mr. Mathwin: It has to.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Yes. In addition, in relation to coast protection work, the council may seek the approval of the Coast Protection Board to carry out those works. This has worked satisfactorily. Section 33 (1) of the principal Act provides:

Where the board carries out works within the area of a council or the areas of two or more councils, or benefiting that area or those areas, for the protection, restoration or development of any part of the coast within a coast protection district the board may recover, as a debt, from the council or councils contribution towards the expense incurred in carrying out those works.

So, what we are seeking in this Bill already exists, in principle, in the legislation. In other words, where there is simply engineering work to be carried out along the coast, the council may receive help and a grant from the Coast Protection Board. If, in the view of the board, engineering work needs to be carried out along the coast and the council is not willing to make an application, the board may carry out the work and then charge up to one-half of the cost to the council. This system has worked well.

Over the last two years about $2 000 000 has been spent by the Coast Protection Board on engineering works along the coastline. The contributions from councils have amounted to about $80 000. The Coast Protection Board fully appreciates that councils cannot find the sort of money involved, and accordingly one of the aims has been to make the least possible impact on councils. We understood what was the intention when the legislation was passed (certainly, that was my understanding), it being wide enough to include the purchase of land for the protection of the coast as part of our engineering process. We have been told by the Crown Law Department that this is not the case. Accordingly, this simple amendment has been introduced to clarify what I believe all honourable members understood to be the position in 1972. Had that not been the position, what we are seeking to do here would have been embodied in the Act already.

Mr. Mathwin: Why didn't local government understand?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I will explain that to the honourable member. The honourable member will see that new section 32a (1) provides that, where a council proposes to acquire land forming part of the coast with a view to protecting it, it can apply to the board for a grant. For many years this provision was not available to councils, which were often unable to afford this sort of work.

Mr. Mathwin: Before this Act was passed they got funds from the Tourist Bureau.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Councils would get nothing like $2 000 000 in two years from the Tourist Bureau, as the honourable member knows.

Mr. Mathwin: What about—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Glenelg has already spoken once.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: We have the situation where the council can primarily apply to the board for a grant. We also have the situation where, if it is the board's view that a property should be purchased in the best interests of total coast protection and community interest generally, but a council is reluctant or refuses to act, the board can take the necessary steps to purchase that property and charge the council up to half the cost. This is exactly the same principle as applies currently in respect of engineering works. Under section 32 a council can apply for a grant to assist it with engineering works. However, the Bill provides that, if the council is reluctant to do so and if the matter is in the community interest, the board can take the necessary steps to do the work and charge the council. There are a couple of additional safeguards in this new section regarding purchases of land required for coast protection. New section 22 (3) provides:

> The board may with the approval of the Minister—
> (*a*) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land acquired under this section;

I refer to a matter raised by the Deputy Leader. The board may, "sell, lease or dispose" of land or (not "and") "by agreement with the council for the area in which the land is situated, place the land under the care, control and management of that council". The primary object once the land is purchased is to give it to the council to manage. The board is not in the land management business. There is no provision that the council must take the land, but the object is to provide for the future use of the land under the care, control and management of the council. There is a let-out; if the council cannot afford to manage the land it can decline to take it. The words "by agreement with the council" are included in the new subsection and, if a council did not take the land, the board would then be required to undertake the maintenance of the area. Clearly, under that provision we are aiming to provide funds to councils, either by a grant or by other means, to control the land.

As I pointed out earlier, the provisions applying in respect of engineering works provide for a percentage payment. The Government has never required councils to make their full contribution. In some cases it required them to make no contribution if they were unable to do so, and the same situation applies in this instance with land going back to the council. What we are seeking in relation to land in the member for Goyder's district and in other areas is to assist councils where they want to provide land. That is the main object. I do not think that anyone can object to that. In recent years the Government's attitude on the Coast Protection Board has been spelt out through the acquisition of land in the West Lakes area that it has purchased or intends to purchase with the assistance of the Australian Government. The Australian Government has given more than $250 000 towards this project. This is to buy back land under the West Lakes indenture. The indenture was created at a time when most members were thinking as members opposite are thinking today. We believe that sections of that land are important for coast protection. The State Government will be required through the board to find far more money in addition to that amount to purchase the area of land that it thinks necessary for total protection of that area.

Mr. Dean Brown: For how much did you sell it originally?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I have no idea off hand what those figures are. We recognise, when we are talking of the purchase of land involving more than $500 000, that a local council could not be asked to make anywhere near the required 50 per cent contribution. Instead, the council will be required to make no contribution whatever. This is an example of the Government's intention in this matter. However, we could get a situation where a local council should be moving to shift vehicles, for example, from a beach where vehicles are now being parked on a beach. The board might require the council to create a car park in an area of that beach, but not on the beach.

Mr. Mathwin: On the Esplanade?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Certainly not on the Esplanade. The honourable member knows that the board does not believe in the development of the Esplanade. Assume that the council concerned did not approach the board or would not agree to apply to the board for the purchase of the property required to provide a car park to keep vehicles off the beach. The member for Glenelg says, "If that is the case, too bad." So far as I am concerned, it is not too bad. The board should have the power to take necessary steps in the public interest. I make one further point that, at the earliest possible time, the management plan that has been prepared for our coastline, and referred to by the member for Hanson, will be in operation. The plan will go on public display. It will be approved by councils and by their communities for the total development of beaches, one way or the other.

Then the community will know that, once the management plan has been approved in whatever form the end result will be, the land will be required for coast protection. By supporting and promoting the part of the management plan relating to its area, the council will be approving the purchase of certain areas along the coast. Surely we should be in a position to assist councils to pay for such land, because we know that they cannot match these funds or make any of these purchases without considerable assistance. Finally, I refer to the point made by the Deputy Leader, but I cannot see any real problem with the point he raised. I am surprised that he does see a problem. Once an area is acquired, there must be some provision to enable the board to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of such land.

A person's property may be acquired, and I again use the example of the need for a car park. If that property is larger than is required for the car park, does the Deputy Leader suggest that we should purchase only two-thirds of that property? Should we not be in a position to purchase the total property and then sell or lease the area back to the council to provide a

reserve alongside the area to be used as a car park? It is necessary that the board have safeguards to dispose of any land that may be surplus to its requirements.

Mr. Coumbe: How could it be disposed of?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I think I have given sufficient examples. We may be able to dispose of it in such a way that a section of the land would be used only for recreational purposes or for a grassed area, or something of that kind, or we could hand it over or sell it. If it was not for the narrow interpretation of what constitutes engineering works, and the board's powers, this amending Bill would not have been necessary; yet, it was clearly in the minds of all members of Parliament in 1972 that these indentical powers were already contained in the Act.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill (teller), Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Noes (17)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe (teller), Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Mathwin, Millhouse, Rodda, Russack Venning, and Wardle.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells. Noes—Messrs. Allen, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Tonkin.

Majority of 4 for the Ayes.

Second reading thus carried.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Powers of acquisition."

Mr BECKER: The Minister, when referring to the development plan presented by Pak-Poy and Associates that relates to the whole of the metropolitan coastline district, said that it would be displayed by the various councils and that the public would have an opportunity to examine it. No doubt, ratepayers will have an opportunity to form opinions one way or another and to lodge objections. It is necessary that the board have powers of acquisition to assist local government in carrying out what is contemplated in the plan. However, I am concerned with the first part of the proposal, namely, to develop the whole of the esplanade along West Beach. It appears from the plan that West Beach Sailing Club will disappear. The plan includes a tree shelter belt and various car parks, and a restaurant is to be included in the area. Regarding Glenelg, it is expected that the surf life saving club be resited and that the fun parlour area be resited and converted into a barbecue area. I would not object to that, because the fun parlour causes problems. If it was located elsewhere, it could be better controlled.

I understand that the Henley Sailing Club owns its own property; it is one of the rare strips along the foreshore that is privately owned. I seek the Minister's assurance that it will be Government policy that no private dwellings will be acquired for the purpose of car parking along the coastline. Areas of Glenelg North could create problems in this regard. Can the Minister say that there will be no unnecessary acquisition of private dwellings in connection with the plan and whether residents will be able to object to any part of the plan that may not be satisfactory to them?

[*Midnight*]

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL (Minister of Environment and Conservation): I do not know that it is necessary to give the assurance that the honourable member has sought, because obviously anyone, whether the council or the Coast Protection Board, who was dealing with car parking facilities would not buy established properties, unless that was absolutely essential, because of the high cost of such a development. The honourable member has referred to surf life saving clubs and suggests that the proposals recommended that they be shifted. They certainly will have the opportunity, as will the honourable member and any member of the community in the area, to seek to have the proposals amended in accordance with their desires when the proposals are put on display.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: To me, this clause is objectionable. The power that we give the board by new subsection (1) (*b*) of section 22 is extremely wide. The remainder of the new subsection is the same as in the present section 22 and we are adding, by paragraph (*b*), a broad general power that will cover almost anything. The board must be satisfied that the purpose for which it seeks acquisition is consistent with the functions and duties assigned to it. Presumably, that means that the purpose must not be inconsistent with some of the functions and duties of the board. The provision is extremely wide and, as I see it, would justify almost any purpose.

The duties of the board, as set out in section 14, also are wide, and I refer particularly to section 14 (1) (*c*). The term "functions and duties" has been slung together by the draftsman or the Minister who takes responsibility for the Bill, but it is extraordinarily broad. We are in effect giving the board, with the approval of the Minister, *carte blanche* to acquire for any purpose that it likes. The Minister said, in closing the second reading debate, that we thought that we had given these powers to the board in 1972. That is not my recollection. Now the Minister has said, on the advice of the Crown Solicitor, that we did not give it those powers. Now the Government is making sure that there are such wide powers that the board can do anything, and I do not agree to that. The member for Goyder has referred to the land at Kooly-wurtie. I think this clause is thoroughly bad, and I do not think we should agree to it. I have dealt only with paragraph (*a*). Other members have referred to what paragraph (*b*) may mean. It is a trick of a Government such as this to try to arrogate to itself or to its creature wide and vague powers. It is convenient to be able to do, by Executive act, what one likes. I oppose the clause.

Mr. MATHWIN: What does the Minister intend in relation to new subsection (3) (*b*) of section 22? Will the responsibility for the development and maintenance of the land be a matter for the council?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: In most cases, that would be the position. It would depend particularly on the purpose of the use of the land. Doubtless, the council would not agree to take over land if heavy maintenance costs were involved, without an assurance that the board would do it.

The Committee divided on the clause:

Ayes (20)—Messrs. Broomhill (teller) and Max Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Noes (17)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe (teller), Eastick, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Mathwin, Millhouse, Rodda, Russack, Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells. Noes—Messrs. Allen, Evans, McAnaney, and Nankivell.

Majority of 3 for the Ayes.

Clause thus passed.

Clause 3—"Grants to councils for acquisition of land."

Mr. BECKER: Is there a limit on the amount of assistance for which a council can apply, and what assistance will the State Government offer to councils in relation to Commonwealth funds for the purpose of acquiring land?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: No limit has been set, and any grant made will depend on the finance available to the board for this type of activity. Despite the exaggerated claims that have been made this evening, the board will be restricted in this respect, as it has barely sufficient funds to carry out normal engineering works. Naturally, land will be acquired only when funds are available. Having approached the Australian Government, the South Australian Government was the first State Government to receive assistance in this respect, and that was in relation to the West Lakes scheme. The Government will continue to seek such assistance.

Clause passed.

Clause 4—"Contributions to the board."

Mr. MATHWIN: I move:

In new subsection (4), after "acting", to insert "with the approval of a council"; and before "council" first occurring to strike out "a" and insert "the".

When I foreshadowed moving my amendments, the Minister said he would not support them because, when councils acquired properties, the board made grants to them of up to half the cost involved. The Minister also said that a provision similar to this was included in an earlier clause. Councils have always been able to acquire land, irrespective of the Act or this Bill, so the Minister is completely off the track. It is imperative that councils participate in any consultations that take place and any decisions that are made, because they will have to meet part of the considerable costs that could be involved. I agree that in the past the board has been lenient with councils: if they have been unable to afford certain things, the board has been flexible. However, once this provision is put in the Act, that will be the end of the matter, no matter which Government is in office. The Minister said it would be good for the board to have this power if community interest was involved. However, who would be more concerned? The council would be much more concerned about community interest than would the board because, after all, the council knows its area and would realise whether or not a certain proposal was good for it. To say that the board would know better than the council in this respect is rubbish. I therefore ask the Minister to support the amendment.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I oppose the amendments, as clause 3 provides exactly what the member for Glenelg is now trying to achieve. Under that clause, if a council wishes to acquire land it can apply to the Coast Protection Board for financial assistance.

Mr. Mathwin: But they do that, anyway.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: As he has shown many times, the member for Glenelg does not understand the Local Government Act. Although councils can purchase land for recreational and other purposes, they certainly have no power to acquire land for the protection of the environment. This clause empowers the board, when a council refuses to act in the interests of coast protection, to take certain steps. The honourable member wants to amend the clause to provide that action can be taken only when the council agrees. As this is contrary to the intention of the Bill, I oppose the amendments.

The Committee divided on the amendments:

Ayes (17)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Mathwin (teller), Millhouse, Rodda, Russack, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (20)—Messrs. Broomhill (teller) and Max Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Allen, McAnaney, Nankivell, and Tonkin. Noes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells.

Majority of 3 for the Noes.

Amendments thus negatived.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL (Minister of Environment and Conservation) moved:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): The powers provided by the Bill are so wide that the Coast Protection Board, with the approval of the Minister, can acquire land along any part of the coast. No protection at all is afforded to landowners. Therefore, people who own property along the coastline will always be under the threat of losing it, as it could be acquired for any purpose decided by the board, with the Minister's approval.

We have discovered that the State Government is assisting councils to acquire properties, having approached the Australian Government in this connection. Already, West Lakes has benefited by $250 000 and there is more to come. We do not know where we will finish up; we do not know what will happen along the entire coastline of the State. Although reference has been made to the metropolitan coastline, the coastline in country areas could also be affected; the threat is there. The Government has the widest possible power, with landowners having no right of appeal. For these reasons, I find the Bill most obnoxious.

The House divided on the third reading:

Ayes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill (teller), Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wright.

Noes (17)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker (teller), Blacker, Boundy, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Mathwin, Millhouse, Rodda, Russack, Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Duncan, Dunstan, McRae, and Wells. Noes—Messrs. Allen, Dean Brown, McAnaney, and Nankivell.

Majority of 4 for the Ayes.

Third reading thus carried.

Bill passed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12.30 a.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, March 13, at 2 p.m.