

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 9 March 1994

The **SPEAKER (Hon. G.M. Gunn)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

CITRUS PEEL

A petition signed by 321 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government not to allow the operation of a solar citrus peel drying facility in Botting Road, Glossop was presented by Mr Andrew.

Petition received.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

A petition signed by 51 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to reintroduce capital punishment for crimes of homicide was presented by Mr Becker.

Petition received.

MID NORTH ROADS

A petition signed by 157 residents of South Australia requesting that the House urge the Government to upgrade the intersection of the Snowtown to Yacka, Blyth to Brinkworth and Kangaroo Flat Roads was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON (Minister for Industrial Affairs): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: At 12.30 this afternoon I publicly released details of the State Government's industrial relations reform package. The central item of that reform package is a new industrial Bill to be known as the Industrial and Employee Relations Act 1994.

The Bill, which replaces, in full, existing State laws, has already been circulated to employee and employer members of the Industrial Relations Advisory Council. The Bill will be subject to intensive consultation between this Government and trade unions, employer associations, employees, employers, other interested parties and the public prior to its introduction into this House later this month.

A coordinated plan of consultation with the industrial relations community has already been determined. My office this morning met with the United Trades and Labor Council's Working Party on this Bill and provided a briefing. Over the next two weeks final details of the schedules to the Bill and its transitional arrangements will be forwarded to these parties as part of the ongoing consultation process.

The industrial relations reform proposed by the South Australian Government in this Bill is one of the central components in the rebuilding of this State to ensure that we increase our productivity and become nationally and internationally competitive. South Australia must become a State where new employment is positively encouraged. Current industrial laws actively discourage employment. These reforms will give employers a positive attitude to putting on new staff and will stimulate this State's economic recovery.

These reforms will provide tremendous opportunities for employees and responsible trade unions to improve the wages and working conditions of their members by focusing upon the needs of individual enterprises.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has leave to make a ministerial statement. Yesterday the member for Ross Smith was warned at least three times in this Chamber. He will not get the same latitude today. I warn him: he will be named if he continues to disrupt the proceedings of the House.

The Hon. G.A. INGERSON: These reforms will strike the right balance between the interests of employers, employees and trade unions. These reforms will maintain all existing industrial awards as promised and will make key award standards the minimum safety net for enterprise agreements. These reforms should produce opportunity, not fear. These reforms should produce economic growth, not economic stagnation, as of the past. These reforms will actively promote enterprise bargaining at the workplace as the preferred method of regulating industrial relations. These reforms will outlaw preference to unionists, outlaw compulsory unionism and outlaw closed shops forced by employers or unions. Individual choice of union membership will be a central principle of the new system.

These reforms will ensure that the restructured Industrial Relations Court and Industrial Relations Commission will maintain its powers to conciliate and arbitrate disputes and enforce award standards. These tribunals will be made more accessible to employers, employees, trade unions and enterprise unions.

These laws will continue to make an unfair dismissal jurisdiction available to employees in the Industrial Relations Commission but will alter that jurisdiction to produce a fairer and faster method of resolution of these disputes.

In order to protect employees against unfair treatment these reforms also establish the office of the Employee Ombudsman who will be empowered to investigate claims of coercion against them by employers and to represent those employees before the Enterprise Agreement Commissioner. In addition, unions will maintain existing rights of representation on behalf of their members. These reforms will also encourage the formation of enterprise based unions.

In order to curb irresponsible union activity these reforms introduce secondary boycott provisions into South Australian industrial laws. With the introduction of new enterprise agreement laws into the Act the Industrial Court and the Industrial Commission will be consequentially restructured, with the Industrial Commission comprising two separate divisions—the Industrial Relations Division and the Enterprise Agreement Division. Under these reforms commercial contract arrangements with sub-contractors will not be included in the industrial relations system. However, contracts with outworkers will be subject to investigation by the Employee Ombudsman.

Parliamentary Counsel have also taken this opportunity to redraft all remaining provisions of the existing Act to reflect these policy matters and to express the law in plainer language. These reforms will continue existing cooperative arrangements with the Federal Industrial Relations Commission where they are seen to be of benefit to South Australia.

Under these reforms the Industrial Relations Advisory Council will be restructured as an advisory committee under the one piece of industrial legislation. These reforms implement in full the Liberal Party's industrial relations policy which it released well before the December 1993 State

election. It will implement this policy, which received the overwhelming mandate of the people of South Australia on 11 December 1993. These reforms will be discussed and debated by the State Government with all interested parties over the coming weeks in an environment of cooperation and consultation.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I bring up the fourth report of the Legislative Review Committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr CUMMINS (Norwood): I bring up the minutes of evidence given before the Legislative Review Committee on regulations under the Education Act relating to the Alberton Primary School and move:

That the minutes of evidence be received.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

GRAND PRIX

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier give a categorical assurance to this House that the Australian Formula One Grand Prix will definitely remain in Adelaide until 1996, or has the Government bowed to pressure from Victoria to hand over the race two years early?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: In December last year the *Advertiser* reported:

Mr Brown said Victoria could 'get lost' over a call by organisers to hold the race from 1995 despite SA's having the contract until 1997.

'They (the Victorian organisers) argued with me that they should have a right to run the race after 1994,' he said.

'I said go and get lost.'

Then on 10 February the Premier told this House that he went to London to ensure that South Australia had secured the race for another three years. It is now reported that the Government will agree to hand the race over to Victoria after the end of this year.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I throw back the question: who gave Victoria the race?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Who, by their negligent action, sold South Australia out when it came to the Grand Prix? Members opposite.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wish to continue their conversation, I ask them to do it outside the Chamber or I will assist them to do so.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: It astounds me that the Leader of the Opposition is willing to come into this House and simply repeat deliberate rumours which are being spread around Victoria at present and which are deliberately aimed

at undermining the commercial position of the Grand Prix in South Australia. That is how much commercial commonsense the Leader of the Opposition has. He is prepared to deliberately pick up the rumours from Victoria—deliberately pick them up.

We know from the nature of some of the information that it has come from Victoria, particularly with respect to some of the figures being talked about because Victoria has been talking about those figures for quite some time—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am coming to that. It absolutely astounds me that the Leader of the Opposition in South Australia having, by his Government's negligence, lost the Grand Prix from South Australia is now trying to undermine the position of the Grand Prix in South Australia for the next three years. We have a contractual right to the Grand Prix for the next three years. I have confirmed that with Mr Ecclestone of FOCA. However, there are some commercial problems.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: 'Get lost', you said.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Let us talk about these commercial problems and who has caused them. The first commercial problem is that we do not have a naming rights sponsor. We do not have a naming rights sponsor because Victoria clearly has the rights to the Grand Prix after three years, and that of itself is creating enormous uncertainty and difficulty in obtaining a naming rights sponsor. The response from the traditional sponsors is, 'But you have it only on a short-term basis.' Who is to blame, if anyone, for that commercial difficulty? Members opposite.

The second commercial problem is that FOCA is now considering, and has been for some time, running a Pacific Grand Prix. The first Pacific Grand Prix is to be held in Japan either, I think, this month or in early April. This was a matter I talked about publicly. There is nothing secret about it; I raised it immediately after my visit with Mr Ecclestone of FOCA, and the fact that he had raised the possibility of a Pacific Grand Prix in Australia. I argued very strongly that a Pacific Grand Prix during the next three years would adversely affect the commercial viability of the Adelaide Australian Grand Prix. That afternoon I immediately sent a letter to Mr Ecclestone from South Australia House, and it is worth quoting to the House what I said in that letter, as follows:

Accordingly, I have serious concerns about the extent to which an Asian Grand Prix—

it is now called the Pacific Grand Prix—

in Melbourne in 1995 may affect the viability of the 1995 Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Adelaide.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I told Mr Ecclestone that he would severely damage the Adelaide Australian Grand Prix if a Pacific Grand Prix were held in Victoria in 1995, 1996 or even early in 1997. I subsequently spoke to Mr Ecclestone and again raised this issue because a number of rumours had been coming out of Victoria, and deliberately set by Victoria, of course, that they had secured a Pacific Grand Prix for October next year. I raised that matter with Mr Ecclestone. He assured me that no decision had been made to give Victoria a Pacific Grand Prix in October 1995. He said in fact that, as the Pacific Grand Prix had yet to be run in Japan, they

wanted to wait and see whether or not it was successful. He will not be making any decisions about the Pacific Grand Prix until after that date. I again stressed to him the tremendous damage that would be done to the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide if he ever decided to give Victoria a Pacific Grand Prix. I think anyone with commonsense could understand that.

They are the two key commercial issues which are currently a threat to the next three Grands Prix in Adelaide. No-one with any commonsense could argue otherwise. If there is a Pacific Grand Prix in Melbourne in October next year, there would be enormous difficulties in then trying to run a Grand Prix in Adelaide in November next year, not only in terms of attracting an audience but also in attracting sponsors, particularly from the corporate sector, to take up boxes. I reiterate: we have the contract for the next three years. The position of the Government is that we would like to run it for three years, but we have these commercial difficulties which are a threat to it.

The other interesting thing in terms of the Grand Prix, particularly for this year, is that I have been looking for the invitation that was apparently sent by the then Minister of Tourism to Princess Di, the Princess of Wales, to attend the 1994 Grand Prix. In fact, I have found that no invitation was ever sent, even though it was a major issue during the election campaign immediately prior to the 1993 Grand Prix when he stood up, grandstanded and got the publicity by saying, 'I have today invited the Princess of Wales to come to the 1994 Grand Prix'. What did I find? No letter was sent whatsoever.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: You produce the letter, because I have asked throughout Government for the letter. You produce the letter.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: The letter was sent to the palace—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I hereby challenge the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to produce that letter.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the Premier has nearly answered the question.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No wonder they called him the Minister for misinformation!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Chair does not want to have to start warning individual members. The member for Colton.

GUERIN, MR BRUCE

Mr CONDOUS (Colton): What information can the Premier provide to the House about any reports prepared by his department on South Australia's overseas representation?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Following the question and answer in the House yesterday on this matter, when the Leader of the Opposition interjected and said a report was prepared by Mr Guerin on the overseas representation of South Australia, I indicated that I could not find that. I was then astounded to find in the paper this morning that Mr Guerin said that no report was prepared.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I then set about flicking through a few Government files to find out in some detail exactly what went on. I bring to the attention of the House, which was the point I raised yesterday, that on 16 September

1992 the then Premier, Mr Arnold (now Leader of the Opposition), said:

I have asked him [Mr Guerin] to undertake a review of our overseas representation. I believe it to be a very high priority piece of work that should take place.

As Premier, he apparently asked for this work to be undertaken and presumably a report prepared. He said himself yesterday that a report was prepared. I then found that three weeks later an official decision was made by the former Government to transfer Mr Guerin from the position of Director, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, to the position of Special Adviser, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, preparatory (listen to this) to taking up a South Australian Government representative role in Japan and Korea.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: They were trying to find Mr Guerin a job, but this was only three weeks after telling this Parliament in the Estimates Committee that he was to undertake this major review of our overseas representation for the next 12 months. Just to get the position clear, that was in October 1992. I then found evidence that showed that in May 1993 none other than the Premier had proposed that Flinders University should establish a centre to undertake research, teaching and consulting in public sector management and that the services of Mr Bruce Guerin would be made available as its head.

This was not, as I had thought, a request from Flinders University to set up this new public sector management school: in fact, it had come from the Premier. Here was the Premier of the day unwilling to take the hard decisions about what to do with the former Director-General of his department. First, it was said that Mr Guerin had the job of reviewing overseas representation and three weeks later it was said, 'We are about to send him off to Japan and Korea.' In May 1993 it was suggested that he set up a special school at taxpayers' expense at Flinders University and that Mr Guerin should take the position of head of that school. I then found in a document in June 1993—

An honourable member: Don't tell us there is more?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, there is more. If one wanted to go through all the documentation on this topic, one would find there is heaps more. I found a document containing the following quotation:

While this whole proposal has been developed to make the best use of Bruce's talents in the current circumstances. . .

I emphasise that quote. That was in June 1993. If ever a job was created at taxpayers' expense, it was at Flinders University to provide a job for Mr Guerin. There is then another document of July 1993 that shed extra light on this. At that stage the former Government had committed \$1 million of taxpayers' money to set up this school of public sector management, and this document states:

At present, of course, the proposals exist only in outline.

The Government had already committed \$1 million of taxpayers' money to that, even though it was a very nebulous proposal in outline only.

Mr Lewis: On a white board?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I suspect it had not even got to that formal stage. I suspect it was still in their minds. The final document highlights the way this former Government of South Australia operated. The letter was sent on 30 November 1993, less than two weeks before the election—in the middle of the election campaign; in fact towards the end

of that rather extended election campaign—and the letter from the Premier's Department accompanied a \$100 000 cheque to set up that school. Here was the then Government in caretaker mode looking after the interests of South Australia but spending and committing \$1 million and sending the first \$100 000 of that to pay for a position to be established to make political life much easier for the Government. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition and shame on the former Government.

GRAND PRIX

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier name—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader has the call.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: Can the Premier name the prominent sporting identities who on or before 26 February 1994 advised him to drop the Australian Grand Prix before the 1996 deadline and make the tenth race the grand finale?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, I can name the place and if I look at my diary I can even give the date. It was at a lunch I attended at Football Park for the launch of the Crows sponsorship for the 1994 season, and there was a range of significant radio—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I will check with them whether they are willing to have their names released, but it is not very difficult to find out, because everyone knows who was sitting at my table. Ask any of the official guests or any of the Crows and they will tell you who was sitting at the table. The subject was discussed around the table, and I was surprised to find how many of those key sporting personalities and journalists expressed that point of view.

GOVERNMENT BOATS

Mr WADE (Elder): What evidence has the Treasurer uncovered about the frequency with which boats owned by State Government departments and agencies are being used?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: This is another story of the previous Government which needs to be told. We made quite clear prior to the election that we intended to ensure that there was a return on all assets of Government, and over the years of Opposition we brought forward to this Parliament and the people of South Australia many instances of misuse and abuse within the public sector as a result of the mismanagement of the Government of the day—the Labor Government. It was brought to my attention that a large number of boats were owned by various authorities, and at the time there was a TV item on that matter.

It was also brought to my attention that the previous Government had produced its own report on boats. A report dated June 1993 and written by the Government adviser on deregulation, Mr Peter Day, highlighted the minimal use of some of these Government owned boats, but I am advised that the report effectively ended up at the bottom of the harbor. The report was presented to the Government at that time and it never saw the light of day. Some important conclusions were drawn from that report, including that most of the boats were under-utilised and that the expenditure and the asset could not be substantiated.

An honourable member: Where are they?

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: They are in a number of Government departments and authorities. I am pleased to

report that the new ministry is already taking action on this matter, including the Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Transport. To give some indication of the wastage of boats in this State, I point out that in Government or general public sector ownership we have about 800 boats, but some 567 of those are held by school councils, so they do not count. The remainder are under the control of the Government or its statutory authorities. Mr Day found that Marine and Harbors logged an average of only 5.7 hours per week of usage. We found three Water Police patrol boats which were averaging only 9.2 hours per week. As for the fourth Water Police vessel, we could find no logged hours for the 17 metre *Des Corcoran* (aptly named) but over \$1 million was expended on that vessel. Four patrol boats from the fisheries divisions were meeting the need.

However, the figures for the trailered boat fleet of the Fisheries Division revealed that 11 trailered boats logged an estimated total of 48 hours each for the year, and that is less than one hour's work a week per boat. The report made some suggestions on how we could clean up this whole area, with proposed amalgamations of the boat fleets and proper management of them. It is important to understand that this report was produced in June 1993. It was an important report, dealing as it does with millions of dollars of taxpayers' money invested in these boats. However, the report was never acted upon or passed on: it was put at the bottom of the harbour by the previous Government.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Can the Premier explain why the Cabinet code of conduct for Ministers no longer requires Ministers to divest themselves of shares and interests in businesses in their portfolio areas? During the election campaign the Premier released a code of conduct for Ministers. That code of conduct indicates that Ministers may not be on the boards of publicly listed companies or continue as directors of private companies, but it makes no mention of shares or company ownership. The Cabinet handbook of the previous Labor Government required Ministers to divest themselves of all shares and similar interests in any company or business involved in the areas of their portfolio responsibilities where those shares or interests could reasonably be expected to conflict with Ministers' portfolio responsibilities.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The Government does apply that as a standard. No Ministers are allowed to hold shares in a publicly listed company that would conflict in any way with their portfolios. Ministers have all sent me a list of their interests. You will find that most of the Ministers, and I am one of those, have now completely divested themselves of all shares in publicly listed companies. I did so as Leader of the Opposition, and I believe that you cannot be Premier and hold shares in publicly listed companies without a potential conflict of interest, simply because you do not know when someone may come through the door from one of those publicly listed companies and put a request to Government.

Equally, Ministers cannot hold shares in companies that deal directly with their Government departments unless, of course it is so nebulous that it represents a second, third or fourth indirect form of contact. I have a list of all those companies where Ministers do have any holdings at all, whether they be private or public. It is not just on my judgment: it is given to the Department of Premier and

Cabinet to go through and monitor, and as a Cabinet we have religiously adhered to that matter. If anyone has a remote interest in a particular issue, that has been noted on the Cabinet submission and the Ministers concerned have withdrawn from Cabinet completely—not just pushed their chairs back but withdrawn completely. I have bent over backwards to make sure that there can be no conflict of interest.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Manufacturing, Small Business and Regional Development. As it is now two months since the launch of the Government's jobs package to help generate employment in South Australia, can the Minister provide an update on the number of inquiries about the various programs, and explain how many inquiries have been converted into actual assistance?

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: I reported to the House after one month of the operation of the jobs package scheme, and I am pleased to report to the House after some two months, because this is another success story on the Government's policy direction.

The Hon. D.S. Baker: One a day!

The Hon. J.W. OLSEN: It has almost been one a day—keep up that track record! Up until Monday some 2 500 inquiries have been received in relation to the Government's jobs package scheme. Some 1 213 inquiries have been made in relation to Workcover, 477 of which have been returned; 392 companies are now directly benefiting, which means that employees have been put on the payroll of those respective companies; 42 declined and 43 are requiring further details.

The second most significant and popular of the schemes is the young farmers' incentive scheme, for which there have been some 410 inquiries to date and under which the Government will assist young farmers to remain on the land through subsidising commercial interest rates. In addition, the employment brokerage scheme has received some 79 inquiries from interested people. The group training scheme has received 19 inquiries, and the greening of urban South Australia, some 60 inquiries.

The business development plan program—a very important measure designed to encourage businesses to develop a business plan to enable them to access finance, in particular with the risk averse approach of the financial institutions—will often assist small to medium businesses to access finance for upgrading plant and equipment and/or employing further people. Up until Monday, almost 300 businesses had inquired about business development plans. Some 49 accountants and consultants had inquired at the Small Business Centre about ways in which their clients could access the scheme, and at least 55 of them have been successful to date. The export employment scheme does not officially start until 1 July but has received some 200 inquiries from people who have contacted the Economic Development Authority. This scheme is designed to assist the development of an export culture within our companies so that they can focus on export markets and import replacements.

All in all, we have received 2 500 inquiries and 1 213 relating to the WorkCover subsidy, and that is a clear demonstration that this Government's policy direction is receiving support from members of the small to medium business community of South Australia who want to access

those programs for the bottom line purpose of generating jobs for South Australians in small to medium businesses.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Will the Premier advise the House whether any Ministers have excused themselves from Cabinet deliberations owing to a conflict of interest caused by their family trusts or whether they have alerted the Premier to a potential conflict because of their investments? If so, has this been recorded for the scrutiny of the Auditor-General? The Liberal Party's code of conduct requires Ministers to inform the Premier should they find themselves in an actual or potential conflict of interest. Information about conflicts is to be tendered at Cabinet immediately and a record kept and made available to the Auditor-General. The code of conduct further requires the Minister to withdraw from the Cabinet room during deliberations when an interest has been declared.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The answer is 'Yes', 'Yes' and 'Yes' to all three questions.

SAMCOR BOMB SCARE

Mr ASHENDEN (Wright): Will the Minister for Primary Industries, following the bomb scare at Samcor on 24 February, explain the safety procedures adopted on this occasion to ensure the safety of all employees? I have been contacted by a constituent who works at Samcor expressing her concern that on the day of the bomb scare neither she nor any other staff at Samcor were asked to leave the premises. She has expressed her concern and asked whether she was in danger and what actions were taken to ensure staff were not in danger.

The Hon. D.S. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his question, and I compliment the management and employees of Samcor for their conduct during the whole incident. They have kept me informed at all times of what happened both on the day and subsequently. As soon as a bomb threat was received at Samcor, management telephoned the Holden Hill police station, whose officers attended immediately. The AMIU delegate was informed continually of what was happening. Strategies put in place in 1991 were followed on the day in question. All occupants of boning rooms were informed of the situation and were given the choice to evacuate. Most people did not elect to do so.

Management got together with the police to search the building and kept all employees informed of what was going on. They also remained in constant contact with State police control. I am informed that further refinement of the evacuation procedures has now taken place, and this has involved meetings held with union delegates over the past two weeks.

The Holden Hill police station was kept fully informed at all times and discussions have been held with them to ensure that procedures run smoothly in future. Throughout the period involving this unfortunate incident, at all times the safety of employees was paramount and the police and management acted with the utmost haste and in the best interests of all concerned.

PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTS

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): Will the Premier provide full details of employment contracts and performance agreements for Mr Michael Schilling, the new head of the Premier's

Department, and Mr Peter Boxall, the newly appointed Under Treasurer, as well as employment contracts and performance agreements of all newly appointed CEOs? The Economic and Finance Committee report on executive salaries recommended that all new or amended remuneration contracts over \$100 000 for public sector employees must be reported to Parliament. The Government in its response to the Economic and Finance Committee report on 10 February this year agreed that there must be full public disclosure of remuneration levels and employment details in line with the recommendation and agreed that confidentiality provisions should not be included in any public sector employment contract.

The Premier's ministerial statement yesterday on public sector remuneration provided only partial details of new employment contracts and did not provide public disclosure as recommended by the Economic and Finance Committee and agreed to by this Government.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: The answer is 'No'; it is inappropriate to release the entire document.

Mr Quirke: Accountability!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: There was accountability when the Government announced the appointment. Without being asked, we included in the original statement the salary paid and how it was broken down. If ever a group of people deliberately used commercial confidentiality to hide behind it is the former Labor Government of South Australia. Year after year, whether it was the State Bank—

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Playford. A number of other members on my right are interjecting far too much. The honourable Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: If ever a group of people hid behind commercial confidentiality it was the Opposition, which was in Government in this State for 11 years, whether it involved the State Bank, Beneficial Finance, SGIC, employment contracts and all other areas.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, or Mr Bruce Guerin. We came out from the beginning and indicated in our original statement how much Mr Schilling and Mr Boxall were being paid. I have responded to the Economic and Finance Committee and given certain assurances in terms of 80 per cent of the money being paid as cash and only in exceptional circumstances would that not be the case. In both cases those assurances have been fully complied with.

POLICE TRANSIT DIVISION

Mr BASS (Florey): Will the Minister for Emergency Services advise the House of the arrest report rate of the Police Transit Division following the first month of operation of the 19 former transit officers as fully operational police officers?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I thank the honourable member for his question. Other members will be aware of his strong interest in policing issues. On a previous occasion I reported to this House the initial effect felt on public transport through the introduction of police officers. I am now pleased to advise the House that, following our first full month of policing presence on public transport, we saw a total of 199 arrests and reports for February 1994 compared with just 19 such arrests and reports in February 1993. That is not to say that there has been a new crime wave on public transport. Rather, for the first time in this State, we now have people

with adequate powers to ensure that we make public transport safe again.

I visited the Police Transit Division on Friday night and was pleased to hear from officers undertaking their duties. They told me that they had been waiting seven years for the opportunity to have these powers to police public transport adequately. For seven years the previous Labor Government promised that those powers would come forward, but they did not. The Liberal Government introduced that system in just two months. Members may be interested to know the nature of the reports that have occurred. For example, in February 1993 there were no arrests for assault; there were five such arrests in February 1994.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Spence to not contravene the Standing Orders.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: There were no arrests for robbery in 1993, but there were two in February 1994; none for larceny, seven in the past month; and none for property damage but two in the past month. The effectiveness of the Police Transit Division is even more conclusive when we look at behaviour offences. There was one arrest for public disorder in February 1993 but 49 such arrests in February 1994; two arrests and reports for traffic offences in 1993 and 35 in February 1994; and eight arrests for drunkenness on public transport in February 1993 and 34 such arrests in February 1994.

There has also been a marked increase in the detection of warrant defaulters on public transport. There were three arrests in February 1993 and 22 arrests in February 1994. An honourable member asked how traffic offences can be involved in public transport. If an officer notices a person under the influence of alcohol step off a train and then move to a vehicle and start that vehicle, that person can be arrested for a traffic offence.

It is most encouraging that we have police on public transport able to take action after seven years of failure by the Labor Government. We now have an effective program in place, and I look forward to members of the South Australian public having renewed confidence in safety and law and order on public transport.

STATE BANK

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): My question is to the Treasurer. Have the contracts for the global Treasury officers of the State Bank been extended and, if so, what are the terms of those contracts? During the period of the Labor Government the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer waxed on about the \$600 000 salaries for global Treasury officers in the State Bank. We understand that one of the first actions of this Government was to extend those contracts and that the terms of those contracts included the same provisions as applied previously.

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: I thank the honourable member for his question. It continues to amaze me how the Opposition can ask these questions when it could find the answers within its own ranks. The answers we supply always come back to embarrass it. This is of extreme embarrassment to the former Government.

The Hon. Lynn Arnold interjecting:

The Hon. S.J. BAKER: The Leader of the Opposition should wait for the answer, because it is a very important answer. Members will recall the questions that were asked in the last session of Parliament with respect to remuneration for

those who were operating the Treasury procedures for the State Bank, with Sydney and London as the major areas of activity. It was also revealed that they were on enormous incentive contracts which provided for sums of \$600 000 up to \$900 000 in one particular year because of the way that they were accumulated.

That was revealed to the Parliament at great embarrassment to the Government that it could have allowed such contractual arrangements to exist when the State Bank had vastly increased its Treasury operations so that the levels of remuneration reflected an increase in activity, not an increase in the capacity of people to perform. As the member for Playford was Chairman of the Economic and Finance Committee at the time, he would well remember the circumstances in which those questions were asked. The further question asked was: what has happened to the renewal of the contracts? They were renewed. They were renewed, first, for wind-out and, secondly, they were done in November last year.

YEAR OF THE FAMILY

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurna): Will the Minister for Family and Community Services place on record in this House the Government's policy statement on the family, bearing in mind its importance in the International Year of the Family? There have been some constituent and media discussions over the term 'family', especially after the press statements resulting from the launch of the International Year of the Family.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Understandably, the family is a subject which everyone feels that they know about and upon which everyone has an opinion. The fact that there is debate about the definition of the family reflects the rapid rate of change that the family has undergone over time, particularly in recent times, and it is one of the reasons why it was decided to have the Year of the Family in the first place.

Those who seek a definition of the family are those who question current definitions. Some people want to narrow the definition of family; others wish to expand it and include more non-traditional groups; and others see the family as a broader, even global, community as a means of overcoming racial and territorial boundaries and prejudices.

Attempts to be definitive about the family give rise to emotional debate most of the time. This debate can ignore the diversity of realities facing the family. What is more important in this Year of the Family is the opportunity for the community to debate the matters which are of importance to families and their future in this State.

Government policy states that a family is a parent or parents with dependants and recognises the extended family. The role of family and friends in supporting each other through times of difficulty is highly regarded and will be taken into account in the administration of policy. Everyone has the right to make choices while also having the obligation to accept the consequences of those choices.

The Government's aim is to strengthen and enrich family life with a view to providing a secure environment for children. I hope that all members in this House, even those opposite, will recognise the importance of that aim. The ways that people undertake family tasks and responsibilities will vary, depending on a range of life's circumstances. However, there is solid agreement within the community regarding the benefits and value of family life.

The Government in this important year will establish the

Office of the Family. The Office of the Family will bring to the attention of the Government the impact of policy and legislation on families so that building the future for all South Australians takes account of the family as the basic structure of our society.

UNDER TREASURER

Ms HURLEY (Napier): How does the Premier justify the \$46 415 increase in the Under Treasurer's salary to \$157 900 given the commitment prior to the election to cut executive salaries and the fact that Mr Peter Boxall, the new Under Treasurer, was on a salary of only \$68 663 as an Assistant Secretary in Commonwealth Treasury—less than half what he is currently being paid?

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will come to order. The Premier.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: One of the key factors on the increase was the fact that there is no permanency like there was with the previous Under Treasurer. The previous Under Treasurer had a—

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been asked a question.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Playford and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not interject again.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: As I pointed out yesterday, we had to pay a high price for breaking that permanency—a very high price indeed. Therefore, members will find that the contract principally reflects the fact that the new Under Treasurer, Peter Boxall, who has come from the Commonwealth Government on a salary higher than that outlined by the honourable member, I might add—I am not sure where she obtained her wrong information, but it is higher than that—does not have the permanency nor some of the other contract conditions that were put down by the previous Government.

It astounds me because last night, after going through another Government contract, I found that yet again the Labor Government signed a contract with someone for five years, with an obligation on the Government to pay out the entire contract for the five year period if that person's employment was terminated through unsatisfactory performance. I find that astounding. The previous Government was prepared to sign a five year contract and, if the person proved to be unsatisfactory after six months, we would have to pay for another four and a half years. We have certainly tightened up very considerably in respect of where the previous Government sat in terms of its contracts.

STRATHMONT CENTRE

Mrs KOTZ (Newland): Will the Minister for Health advise the House whether the Government has any plans to close the Strathmont Centre?

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I am delighted to take the opportunity to put to rest this quite dangerous furphy. I thank the member for Newland for her question, and in doing so I acknowledge her continued representations to me about the Strathmont Centre. As the House would know, Strathmont Centre is a key resource for accommodation and care for people with an intellectual disability. At present it provides

accommodation for about 450 people. A range of therapy services are available: medical and dental services, and so on; and education and lifestyle programs. I would emphatically say that the Government has absolutely no plans to close the centre.

The Government is committed to community care being used to the greatest extent possible, but in doing so we are in no way doctrinaire or ideological, and we recognise that for a number of people institutional care is the most appropriate option, and we are committed to the provision of that care. To that extent we would expect Strathmont to be as integral a part of the service for the foreseeable future as it is at the moment. There is no doubt that community based accommodation services are becoming more important in the care of the intellectually disabled. For instance, in 1980 Strathmont had 600 residents but in 1994 it has only 450.

That reduction in residency reflects a number of things: the changing and continuing trends in residential care; the advances in medical care; and, I believe, the advanced tolerance in community attitudes. I think that is a credit to members of the community. Under this Government there will be continued development of community based accommodation as that provides another option for people, and to that end the IDSC plans to take the opportunity to decommission some of the buildings at Strathmont, which have had structural problems, rather than to expend more taxpayers' money renovating them.

It is Bay of Biscay soil and, as I represent the electorate of Adelaide, which I think is the salt damp capital of the world, I am able to say that it is quite expensive to renovate some of these buildings and, so, that opportunity will be taken. At the same time, the Government is looking to invest in core services rather than to deplete those services. In putting an end, I hope, to the rumours, I would say that it is most unfortunate that they have arisen. It is distressing to the clients; it is distressing to the patients; it is distressing to the carers of the people; and it is distressing to the staff, and on and on the list goes. The Government is absolutely committed to providing quality care for people with an intellectual disability.

AYTON REPORT

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): Does the Premier know the identity of the substantive source referred to by the Treasurer on 16 February, or any other source, who provided the former Opposition with the confidential Ayton submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the NCA and, if not, did the Treasurer provide the Premier with any information about the source of the Ayton submission?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: No and no.

ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Is the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations maintaining an option to dismiss the Adelaide City Council, and would dismissal conflict with Liberal Party policy that says 'community have the maximum freedom to determine their own future'? Today's *Australian* reports that the Minister has refused to rule out the dismissal of the Adelaide City Council and that a member of the Minister's staff has said that if the council were dismissed it would be replaced with an administrator.

The Hon. J.K.G OSWALD: If the honourable member looks at the report in the *Australian*, he will see a one line response from me. That one line response is along the lines that there is no evidence before me that would give me any reason to dismiss or to take any action against the Adelaide City Council. It was clearly and simply put to the reporter, and it was accurately reported in the newspaper which, no doubt, the honourable member has read. How the sub-editor ever assigned the story that headline is only in his or her mind, given that the article was written along a certain line. At no stage in that article in that one line response did I indicate to the reporter that I had any evidence whatsoever that would lead me to take any decision as regards the Adelaide City Council.

It should be clearly understood that the powers of the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations are very limited in this regard, and he or she must place very clear evidence before the ministry of any breach within the council. Members should realise that local government is an arena for public and political discussion, albeit at local government level. We often receive requests, through correspondence and telephone calls, to dismiss a council. Quite often, when one analyses the situation, one finds that there is a difference of opinion on council; discussions become very heated, and then there are allegations of factionalism.

People should think carefully before saying that the Minister responsible for local government relations should move to dismiss a council. Certainly, most of us could recall councils that have experienced some sort of political argument. As I said in the *Australian*, there is no evidence before me which would give me any reason to take the action which was suggested in that article.

HARNESS RACING

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles): My question is directed to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. If the decision is taken to allocate no dates to Franklin Harbor and Kimba for the 1994-95 harness racing season, will that be a decision of the Minister?

The Hon. J.K.G OSWALD: I referred to this matter in the House on a prior occasion, and I will repeat the background and explain it again very carefully. The reason why the racing dates have been transferred to Whyalla from Franklin Harbor for this current season is that the running rail is unsafe. The stewards have issued an instruction that there will be no racing on that track. I have written to the Chairman of the Harness Racing Board asking that he give that club the opportunity to repair and make good that running rail before the board takes any step to reduce or withdraw dates for the coming season.

I would imagine that the board at its next meeting will consider the Minister's request and, I hope, report back to me favourably. I see no reason at all why a club such as Franklin Harbor which, in its own right, can run its own affairs at a small profit, as they tell me, should not provide access to that potential training facility to other trainers who would like to use that Franklin Harbor facility for the circuit around the gulf and the metropolitan area.

I would imagine that the board will report back to me and give me advice on the dates for next year. I see no reason why Franklin Harbor should not have a couple of racing dates—or whatever is the appropriate number—because at this stage the club has intimated to me that it can fund the meetings itself.

The only requirement at the moment is to get the running rail put back. I cannot override the board and say racing shall happen before that takes place because of matters of liability should there be an accident. I would imagine that, if the board considers my request, Franklin Harbor will continue racing.

MILK BOTTLES

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Is the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources satisfied that the proposals to ensure that plastic milk containers are recycled are working effectively?

Mr BECKER: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, there is a question on notice.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will allow the question to continue, because I do not have the question on notice in front of me. Therefore, I cannot uphold the point of order. The member for Flinders.

Mrs PENFOLD: The waste management target team attached to the Eyre Regional Development Board has approached me to raise this issue. They foreshadow that the plastic 2 litre non-recyclable milk container will present major problems to the authorities. Allowing the use of these containers is seen as contradictory to reducing wastage by the year 2000. There are claims that more than one million plastic containers are now being dumped in South Australia each month, and the plastic pollution problem could become an environmental crisis. I ask the Minister to address this issue.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I am aware of the interest in this subject by a number of my colleagues on both sides of the House, and I am also aware of the particular interest that the member for Peake has taken in this matter. I am pleased to be able to provide an answer to the member for Flinders on this subject. The honourable member would be aware that the 2 litre plastic milk bottle was introduced into South Australia by the previous Government in December last year. I am informed that in other States this form of packaging has captured approximately 40 per cent of the market. Prior to the introduction by the previous Government, a regulation was made under the Beverage Container Act to remove the 5¢ deposit on this container. It was considered that, given that it would be used primarily in the home, the container would not appear in the litter stream and would not cause a pollution problem. Furthermore, there was a risk that continuation of the deposit could lead to a High Court challenge by the plastics industry.

In discussions with industry on removal of the deposit, it was agreed that steps would be required to ensure that a satisfactory collection and repossessing system was put in place for used containers. The milk industry, that is Dairy Vale and National Dairies, acted jointly to establish the Beverage Industry Recycling Fund. The aim of that fund is to provide assistance to local government and the private sector to facilitate the collection of the containers. It is generally recognised that the most effective way of collecting these containers is through a program of kerb side collection. Until a kerb side recycling service is provided through the State, there are likely to be difficulties that will arise for some people in ensuring the containers are returned for recycling.

The action that is currently being undertaken with the establishment of the Recycling and Waste Management Board will give rise to a more broadly based service by mid-year. I recognise in particular the need for that service to be made available in country areas. I might also say that markets are available in South Australia now for high density plastic.

Rib-Loc, for example, is a major user in terms of the manufacture of plastic piping. In the past, waste plastic has had to be imported from Victoria to meet this company's needs. As I have said previously in this place, if these containers cannot be effectively recycled, or if significant quantities are finding their way to land fill, it will be necessary to reconsider our policy relating to this matter. I give an assurance to the honourable member that that will be the case, that my thoughts are totally open on this matter and that, in time, after a review of the current policy, I will be prepared to reconsider that situation.

The SPEAKER: I point out to the member for Peake, with respect to the point of order he raised in relation to the question asked by the member for Flinders, that the question is on the same subject as his question on notice, but the matters raised by the member for Flinders were different. That is why I allowed the question.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

The SPEAKER: The question before the House is that the House note grievances.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles): In the few minutes allowed to me, I want to make some comments about the so-called Evans Mules report into harness racing in this State, in particular about a number of recommendations in that report which relate to my electorate. The recommendations, if accepted by the Minister, would in effect wipe out the Franklin Harbor and Kimba harness racing clubs. Not to allocate dates for these clubs will see those clubs effectively killed by bureaucratic or political action by the Minister. The reason, apparently according to the report, is to save money. All I can say about that is the amount of money that is being suggested is trivial compared with the costs of operating at Globe Derby. Particularly as these two clubs, the Franklin Harbor club and the Kimba club, operate in the black, I would have thought that, if money had to be saved, they could have looked at much bigger fish than these small but viable country clubs.

If these country clubs are to be killed by the Minister, then I suggest he have a look at other clubs that are not in such a good financial position. The Minister certainly did not give me any great heart in his response to a question a few moments ago because, during his answer, the Minister stated that it was not for him to tell the Harness Racing Board whether dates ought to be allocated to Franklin Harbor and to Kimba. He suggested, as regards Franklin Harbor, that it was his desire to see some dates allocated but would not necessarily attempt to enforce that. That is not good enough for a Minister of the Crown and certainly will not be good enough if this club is killed by the Minister. The Minister will have to accept the responsibility, and pushing it off onto the board will not wear with a lot of people on the Eyre Peninsula if the Franklin Harbor and Kimba clubs are killed by the Minister.

It was suggested that the rail at Franklin Harbor is unsafe. My information is that, if it is unsafe, it has been unsafe for 20 or 30 years, because there has been no alteration to it. It is fair enough that the club be given the opportunity to do

whatever is required to make that track safe on the basis that, if it is made safe, meetings will be allocated to the Franklin Harbor club. Not to allocate meetings will not just be a disaster for harness racing on the Eyre Peninsula: the attack goes much further than that. It is a further attack on country South Australia. For example, service clubs and schools that do the bar and catering for these meetings will lose that revenue if the clubs are killed. The joint funding of the facilities again helps to save the local footy club, etc., to keep it viable. So we get the continual downward spiral in the country of the potential of this Government to kill these clubs and damage significantly the social fabric of the Eyre Peninsula.

I oppose that and I oppose it very strongly. I hope that members opposite, the member for Ridley in particular, and the member for Flinders to some extent, will join with me in ensuring that the Minister does not attack these country clubs in the way that he has done to date. I advise the member for Flinders that Cowell is not in her electorate (even though she claimed it was in her Address in Reply contribution) and there are many people in the electorate of Flinders who want the Franklin Harbor Harness Racing Club to continue.

Therefore, I urge the members for Flinders and Ridley to support country people and to tell the board and the Minister that for bureaucrats—or politicians—to kill these two viable country harness racing clubs is just not on.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lee.

Mr ROSSI (Lee): I thank the member for Spence for bringing me up to date on the history of what I have done outside this House, but I have more important things to do here—to represent my electors. Since I have been a member of Parliament representing the electorate of Lee, I have received several complaints from Housing Trust tenants that their neighbours are too noisy or that they allow their children to be unsupervised in the street. Regarding various offences involving people slashing tyres, throwing rocks on roofs and so on, these people have been told to contact the police to make reports. The police have been to these areas on numerous occasions, sometimes 20 or 30 times in three months, yet the trust has little power to shift undesirable tenants.

The trust can shift undesirable tenants from one street or location to another, but that is not acceptable. The situation causes antagonism within suburbs, resulting in perhaps five or six neighbours arguing, and it takes members of the Police Force away from their more important duties involving serious crimes. Certainly, I am at a loss as to how to solve this problem, but I would like the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations to take up this issue. I refer to letters and responses from residents and the trust, and I would like to cite some of them.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Spence will not make inappropriate interjections. The member for Lee.

Mr ROSSI: Addressed to the South Australian Housing Trust, one letter states:

We, the undersigned residents of D. . . Street—

I will not name the suburb to prevent identification—

and neighbours of the South Australian Housing Trust property wish to draw your attention to behavioural problems with tenants presently in occupation of this house. From the first day of the occupancy we have experienced continued disturbances with regard to excessive music and foul language at all hours of the day and night, necessitating many police calls. Certain neighbours have been subjected to

obscene abusive language by the male occupant, who has obviously no regard or respect for other people. To begin with, some of the neighbours approached these people to ask, in a polite manner to tone the music and language down, but only received a tirade of obscenity for their trouble. The male occupant has other male friends who at times appear to reside at that property also, engaging in regular boozing sessions, after which residents find empty VB stubbies, cans and cartons etc. lying on their nature strips and gutters.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr ROSSI: Thank you. The letter continues:

Obscenities shouted in the early hours of the morning specifically aimed at disturbing people's sleep seems to be a favourite pastime. There are seven young children living in this house—

and this is only one of many letters that are pretty well identical—

who must surely be adversely affected, particularly the ones going to school. Adequate supervision of the children appears to be sadly lacking, as on more than one occasion residents and others using the street have had to slow or stop their cars to avoid young children playing unsupervised on the road.

We have as a group tended to 'cop it sweet' in the past, but due to the persistent and ongoing problems encountered, we can no longer accept this.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Playford.

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): I wish to make a few comments about some of the housing developments that have taken place in my electorate and in the broader northern suburbs of Adelaide in recent times. In particular, I refer to the development at Montague Farm which, in many respects, has set the trend, and a good trend, for many housing developments that have occurred in this State in recent years. It seems the developers have got a number of things right with this project.

First, it was interesting to see the theme of this development which saw all streets being named after people who lost their lives during the Vietnam conflict. Indeed, the South Australian losses in Vietnam will be commemorated on that development at Montague Farm. I was present at the ceremony when the various plaques for the different streets were unveiled to an audience comprised predominantly of family members and others interested in that activity. In many respects the mix of Housing Trust properties *vis a vis* private properties is to be commended, and I believe the trust has done a good job in being associated with the joint development of the project.

However, I would like to bring to the attention of the House a couple of problems. First, as to the housing density of the project, there are some worrying trends. If anyone were to visit the housing estate or drive nearby, they would see that one house almost adjoins the next. Many of the houses in this development are substantial houses on what can be described only as not so substantial blocks of land. I do not have problems with dense housing, as that takes the stress away from other problems in South Australia such as schools, hospitals and the like. However, such dense housing when combined with dense street configurations makes it difficult to park cars on the street and have anything remotely resembling a through flow of traffic.

I am told by the STA that only one main road runs through the development on which a bus service can be properly countenanced. That would be okay but for the fact that there are a number of premises that will house elderly people and younger people who also require public transport, but they will be required to undertake considerable walks as long as

they live in that area. That is one of the problems with the development.

Another issue I wish to address today is that a bit of greed appears to have crept into the proposal. The original project at Montague Farm was for about 867 houses on that site. The development was to be well cushioned on the western side by some interesting landscaping and a pond of one kind or another which, presumably, would fill up with excess rainwater. It is nicely buffered to the Main North Road on the western side. There were a number of problems to the northern side. The brick company, which is the principal neighbour there, made a number of representations to members of Parliament, certainly to me and to the Minister at the time, about the fact that it was necessary to have a significant buffer between this new housing area and the company's operations in Pooraka. The understanding was that this buffer would be of the order of 50 metres or so on the northern side and that this land would not be used for housing.

Unfortunately, that arrangement has been broken, and those persons who bought houses there with the intention of looking over onto a reserve have now found themselves in a situation where they will be looking at further housing and further encroaching onto the land that was originally designated for a reserve. With another 50 houses constructed on this site, in my view it would have been much better had this reserve land been left as it was intended to be—as a satisfactory buffer between the housing development at Montague Farm and the industrial development immediately to its north.

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): I wish to take the opportunity to comment on publicity involving the Marion council. I have recently had occasion to write to the Mayor of Marion expressing my total support for him in his attempts to sort out the problems associated with certain members of that council and their lack of respect and discipline towards the office of Mayor.

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

Mr CAUDELL: As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted by the cockatoo, I had occasion to write to the Mayor saying that I attended his meeting on 28 February 1994 with a view to listening to the presentation of one of the constituents to his council on the subject of recycling. Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Mayor went to great lengths to explain to the members present the regulations pertaining to the conduct of meetings, but it appeared that this message was not heard.

I was concerned by the remarks being made by some council members regarding the personal character of certain constituents of Mitchell who did not have the same opportunities as we or Marion councillors have to seek redress, other than to lodge a complaint with the Mayor and me. Unfortunately, some of those members on the Marion council, in particular Councillors Bruce Hull and Vincent Brown, are still fighting the State election, which was run in December. Mr Vincent Brown is carrying a chip on his shoulder from missing out on preselection.

Basically, the scuttlebutt that is occurring is no different from the fabrications and scuttlebutt being witnessed in this House during Question Time, and it concerns me that this is a lesson that we are teaching our school children who visit this House to listen to Question Time. The recent conduct of some council members displayed total disrespect for the

position of Mayor as well as a total disregard for regulations relating to the Local Government Act. Mr Speaker, I am sure that if the same sort of action had occurred in this House as occurred in that chamber you would have immediately brought the House under control.

I indicated to the Mayor that he had my total support in his actions to ensure that what had happened did not occur in the future, and I discussed with him the fact that the Local Government Association, as well as his council, is currently lobbying Government regarding certain changes to the constitution of local government with a view to widening its powers and responsibilities. I mentioned to him that while this behaviour of certain members continues I could not support any changes to that constitution.

It is unfortunate that the two members concerned recently stated that they found the position of councillor to be a thankless and frustrating task. If that is the case, it may be in the best interests of the City of Marion that they seriously consider their future in local government, as there are no plans to change the system in the short term. I also refer to a letter written by Councillor Hull, stating:

However, I do confess to having a go and unfortunately having to brawl in the best interests of my west ward constituents. Those who have helped would know that I have had to fight hard to defeat the bloody-minded and self-interested elected members.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Napier.

Ms HURLEY (Napier): The issue that I would like to raise today is one of local concern in Munno Para. Some two years ago, the Munno Para school was given tacit approval for a series of renovations and extensions badly needed at the school. Since then there has been fairly extensive consultation between the school community and a succession of SACON project officers. As a result of this consultation, the interest of the school community was aroused and there was great enthusiasm for the proposals. These proposals were successively promised and in early 1993—

Mr BRINDAL: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of House.

A quorum having been formed:

Ms HURLEY: As I was saying, the school community became very enthusiastic about the renovations and, at the expense of the school council, work on the preparation of these renovations and extensions was started and the verandas outside a number of school classrooms were removed in preparation for the work. Members will be aware of the funding situation and of the difficulty in raising money, so this was a significant sacrifice on the part of the school council in preparation for this work. They were told that the work would commence last year. As a result of that, these school classrooms have been exposed to the weather—to the heat and the rain—all during last year, and the work was not commenced. There was still more to-ing and fro-ing with SACON about what needed to be done and about whether approval would come through.

This year—this term—that school is still waiting to hear whether approval has been given for that work to be completed. The school has not been able to get a straight answer from the Education Department or the Minister's office, despite a number of representations from the school council and local council members.

Members interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: That is not my problem. The problem I have is that this work was due to be approved. This school

has been told that the reason it has not been able to get approval involves restructuring of the Education Department. Although the budget allocations were approved last year, it is a matter of restructuring within the Education Department, the reallocation of the project officers and an inability to get the bureaucratic structure right.

Mrs Kotz: What about the \$2.5 million you got last year?

Ms HURLEY: The money has been approved in the budget; we are merely waiting on the approval to go through the changed bureaucratic structure. The Education Department does not know where it is: it has been restructured and restructured again, and one person has been left in charge of the Building Services Division to carry through all these projects. This school has been left totally out on a limb without any answer from the Education Department or the Minister. It does not know where it is or how it is to proceed this year. It does not know whether to restore those verandahs to the school building or where it will be left, but it is aware that the budget allocation was made.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): Yesterday I was telling the House about the Wiltja project, which is a very successful innovation undertaken by the previous Government for the education of people from the Western Desert lands, and I was complaining about the bureaucratic interference that has occurred, damaging an otherwise good project. I indicated that the Commonwealth Department of Education sends out a *pro forma* to people in the Western Desert who, as I informed the House yesterday, according to the tripartite State report, are among the least educated Aboriginal people in this country.

That *pro forma* contains 82 multiple choice questions, all of which must be answered, generally through teachers in the tribal lands having to go out to people to help them fill out the form, collect the information, bring it back and send it to DEET. Until this information is returned, DEET will not provide any money to this State. As I said to the House yesterday, we are not talking about even an institutionalised boarding school in the private sector: we are talking about the Crown and agencies of the Crown running something for the benefit of the people of this State—and a disadvantaged group of people in this State. Apparently, the Commonwealth bureaucrats cannot trust this Government—and I am not talking Labor or Liberal: I am talking the legitimate Government of South Australia—enough to take the Government's word that a certain number of people exist, that that certain number of people are being educated here, and that that certain number of people are entitled to at least a basic level of remuneration. I do not know about other members of the House, but I find that unacceptable and scandalous and probably just an excuse for middle level bureaucrats in Canberra to justify their existence and earn a salary that I suspect is more excessive than they would otherwise be able to command.

As if this was not bad enough, the Commonwealth in its infinite wisdom will not allow any payment to people in the Wiltja program who are Aboriginal people domiciled in Western Australia. Every member of this House would be aware that the Aboriginal peoples were here before we were. Every member in this House would be aware of the artificiality of the State boundaries that are currently drawn on a map. It would be no surprise to the Leader of the Opposition or to anyone else to know that the tribal peoples of the Western Desert do not recognise our State boundaries and that they move in a nomadic pattern freely across the State.

Yet, despite that, the Commonwealth bureaucrats say, 'No, no; we can only apply money for people of the Western Desert who are domiciled in South Australia.' They do so on the grounds that those who are domiciled in Western Australia should go to Perth for their education, even though Perth is literally hundreds of kilometres further from their home than Adelaide, it ignores the traditional patterns of movement and it totally ignores the wishes of the people.

Mr QUIRKE: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Mr Brindal: You can keep doing this all day, and if the member for—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must not interject when a point of order is taken.

A quorum having been formed:

The SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. S.J. BAKER (Deputy Premier): I move:

That, until a Standing Orders Committee report relating to private members business has been adopted by the House, Standing Orders be so far suspended in relation to private members business as to provide that:

(a) unless otherwise ordered the House meets on each Thursday at 10.30 a.m.;

(b) on Thursdays private members business takes precedence in the following manner:

(i) 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon—Bills, motions for disallowance and regulations of motions in respect to committees;

(ii) 12 noon to 1 p.m.—other motions provided that:

(A) notices of motion will take priority over orders of the day in (i) and unless otherwise ordered for the first 30 minutes in (ii);

(B) If all business in (i) is completed before the allotted time the House proceeds to (ii) and;

(C) If all business in (ii) is completed before 1 p.m. on Thursday the sitting of the House is suspended until 2 p.m.

(c) the following entitlements will apply—

Mover 15 minutes;

One member opposing the question as deputed by the Speaker, 15 minutes;

Other members, 10 minutes;

Mover in reply, five minutes;

provided that—

(i) an extension of 15 minutes may be granted by leave to a member moving the second reading of a Bill;

(ii) leave to continue remarks may not be sought by any member, but a member speaking when the allotted time for that category of business is completed has the right to be heard first when the debate is next called on.

(d) Notices of questions ordinarily handed in by 9 a.m. on Thursdays must be handed in to the Clerk Assistant by the adjournment of the House on the preceding day.

Motion carried.

GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION (APPROVED TREATMENT CENTRES) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: 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.

This short Bill is procedural in nature, and is designed to deal with a problem that has arisen during the drafting of Regulations to implement the Act and the *Mental Health Act 1993*.

Section 32 allows the Board, on application by a guardian, to place and detain a person with a mental incapacity. This would allow, for example, an older person with dementia to be held in a secure nursing home. Subsection (3) prohibits the use of these powers to place a person in an "approved treatment centre under the *Mental Health Act 1993*". This prohibition is intended to prevent the use of the *Guardianship and Administration Act* as another vehicle for the compulsory detention of persons who do not have a psychiatric condition (*ie* mental illness) in a psychiatric facility. The mechanism for detention in psychiatric facilities of persons who do have a mental illness is the *Mental Health Act 1993*, and persons must fit the criteria of that Act for detention in that sense to occur.

It was originally intended when the two Acts were drafted that only the psychiatric facilities in general hospitals would be declared to be approved treatment centres. However, it has now been decided to declare the whole of a general hospital to be such a centre, so that the situation is covered where mentally ill people detained in the psychiatric wards of general hospitals, who require acute medical treatment, may be transferred to the most relevant medical (or surgical) ward while still under detention—the *Mental Health Act* only permits such persons to be detained in approved treatment centres.

The unintended consequence of now declaring entire general hospitals as approved treatment centres is therefore that a protected person under the *Guardianship and Administration Act* with say, dementia, could not be placed and held in a general hospital to receive medical treatment they may desperately need.

Explanation of Clauses

The clauses of the Bill are as follows:

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2: Amendment of s. 32—Special powers to place and detain, etc., protected persons

Clause 2 amends section 32 of the Act which sets out certain powers of detention that can be exercised by a guardian in relation to a protected person. It is provided (this is the current intention of the section) that a protected person cannot be detained under this section in the psychiatric ward of an approved treatment centre.

Mr ATKINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

MENTAL HEALTH (TRANSITIONAL PROVISION) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Mental Health Act 1993. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: 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.

This short Bill is procedural in nature. During the last session of the last Parliament, the Mental Health Act 1993 was passed. That Act will repeal the Mental Health Act 1977.

The Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992 provides for the regulation of the range of accommodation facilities which provide care for people, including those with a psychiatric disability. This generic licensing legislation will accordingly replace the specific provisions of Part IV of the Mental Health Act 1977 which currently provide for the licensing of psychiatric rehabilitation centres.

When the Mental Health Act 1993 was passed, it was anticipated that the Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992 would be in operation prior to the Mental Health Act 1993 and accordingly, the Mental Health Act 1993 provided for the complete repeal of the old 1977 Act. However, the consultative process on Regulations to implement the Supported Residential Facilities Act has been extensive and has delayed the commencement of that Act until a date to be fixed later in the year.

It is intended that the commencement of the Mental Health Act 1993 (and the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993) should not be unduly delayed. In order to avoid a hiatus in licensing of psychiatric rehabilitation centres, it is therefore necessary to make

some transitional provision, pending their eventual coverage under the Supported Residential Facilities Act. The Bill therefore inserts the necessary transitional provisions in the Schedule.

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 1 is formal.

Clause 2: Amendment of Schedule

Clause 2 amends the Schedule of the Act which repeals the 'old' Mental Health Act 1977. Extra provisions are added to Clause 1, with the effect that the 'old' Act is amended by striking out all provisions of the Act except those that relate to the licensing of psychiatric rehabilitation centres. These amendments will be brought into operation when the 'new' Mental Health Act 1993 is brought into operation, and the provision repealing the 'old' Act will be suspended until such time as the Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992 is brought into operation.

Mr ATKINSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTORAL (ABOLITION OF COMPULSORY VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 23 February. Page 209.)

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD (Leader of the Opposition):

I indicate at the outset that the Opposition opposes this measure, and I will be detailing the various arguments against it in a little while. In indicating that our opposition to this matter has been longstanding with respect to the viewpoint expressed by the Liberal Party in this State, I make another point, namely, that the Parliament is made up of two Houses and both Houses have been elected by the popular will of the people of South Australia. In the case of this House, members were elected on 11 December and, as is quite well known, the Government of the day won a large majority in this place and my Party was removed from Government.

In the other House, the will of the people was expressed on two occasions: first, in November 1989; and, secondly, on 11 December 1993. On each occasion half the members of the Upper House were elected to that place. That vote and method of voting was designed to give all people in South Australia the opportunity to have their will reflected in the Legislature. The Upper House is just as democratic as this House and just as much reflects the will of the people. It is just as much a House where the members, when voting, know that they have been mandated by the people to vote.

If it happens that the Parliament in either this House or another place makes any decision on any piece of Government legislation, those decisions are made by Houses elected under a democratic system in a democratic way. That was not necessarily the case back as late as the 1970s when we had an Upper House that was not elected democratically, where there was restrictive franchise and an Upper House where there was not only restricted franchise as to who was eligible to vote but also an Upper House with grossly distorted electorates with the urban area of South Australia having only one fifth of the total membership of that Chamber and the other four fifths representing country areas of South Australia.

At that time the point could well have been made that the will of the people of South Australia was not reflected in the membership of that Chamber and, therefore, when matters came before the Parliament of South Australia they went before a democratically elected House and a House that was only partially democratic. That is not the situation at this stage.

To hear, as I have heard the Premier say on some occasions, that the Parliament does not have the right to rigorously

scrutinise this piece of legislation and cast its opinion on it simply because it was announced in some sentences in a Liberal Party policy speech denies the fact that both Chambers in this Parliament have been democratically elected and therefore reflect the will of the people. By speaking in the manner that he has it is possible that the Premier has been indicating that he does not support the Upper House. In fact, he may be coming to a policy that at various times in history has been adopted by my own Party, namely, the abolition of the Upper House. I am not certain of his intention. Perhaps he is proposing that the Upper House be elected at one election rather than the split system we have at the moment. It is up to the Premier to come clean and give his own views on the matter.

I now come to the issue of compulsory and voluntary voting and the reasons why the Labor Party is opposed to the introduction of non-compulsory voting in South Australia. I firmly believe that all people in a democracy have an obligation to defend the democracy. We should not simply look at the issue of voting as a right and a privilege but also at the issue of voting as a duty and an obligation on citizens to defend the democracy.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I know that in some other parts of the world where democracies do not exist they would love to have democracy. We have democracy in this State, and we have a right and an obligation to defend it. We acknowledge that there are many situations in which there are obligations on the citizenry to do certain things in a community. For example, we expect our Government to deliver services in a wide range of areas such as schools, hospitals, roads and many other areas in which the electorate expects the Government to deliver. Given the fact that we do not have a money tree or orchard from which the Government can pluck money to pay for schools, hospitals and roads, we acknowledge that there must be other means of funding, such as funding by the community.

I am not referring to voluntary donations or the Government asking, 'Would you like to buy a lottery ticket to pay for schools and hospitals?' or, 'Would you like to make a donation?'. Services are funded by an obligatory and compulsory taxation system. We do not provide the opportunity for people to say, 'If you do not mind I would rather pass on this. I do not want to exercise my right or privilege to pay tax; I would rather let somebody else do that. This time around I will pass, thank you very much.' Logically we do not let that happen because the suspicion would be—and quite rightly—that many people would choose to opt out of the taxation system.

I am sure that every member of this House would support the proposition of compulsory taxation because they recognise that we have to pay for services if we want schools for our children, hospitals for health care and roads upon which to travel. We recognise that we have a responsibility and obligation and that it is not simply a privilege or right. I could cite other examples of an obligatory nature in the way in which we organise our society. For example, we have obligatory attendance for jury duty, except certain defined exemptions provided for in law. If those exemptions do not apply to someone called for jury duty, that duty must be fulfilled. That is because we have a system of law that contains the important element of the obligation for one's peers to be called upon to cast judgment upon the people taken before a court. That system is one with which some

may not agree, but it is the system we have, and in that situation we acknowledge that one's peers should have some obligation to take part in the legal processes of the country.

In his policy speech I did not hear the Premier, as Leader of the Opposition, rail against this obligation upon the citizenry and rail against the requirement for people to perform their duty with respect to the fulfilment of the justice system of this country. He did not rise up in high dudgeon and protest the civil liberty or right of citizens to be free of that burden of duty. He was very silent on that matter. Yet we have a situation with voting whereby he believes it should be voluntary.

I made the point before about the need to defend a democracy. One may argue the case as to why one should worry about it, and that surely in a voluntary voting system when people vote they will reasonably reflect the views of society at large and a reasonable system of Government and Opposition will result. The fact is that the moment we take away compulsory voting (and in a moment I will discuss what is required in terms of compulsory voting) a large number of people choose not to vote, not as a political statement—although a percentage would do that—but because, on that occasion, it was deemed to be inconvenient for them to do so. In other words, those to whom the significance of the political choice is not very important will bow themselves out of the system.

Whom do we have left? We have left the decision making to those for whom politics is important and constitutes a major part of their thinking and their life. For most who are committed to the political system in one way or another, that represents people like us in this Chamber on all sides of politics, those who have a burning interest in politics, those who have strong beliefs, regardless of whatever those beliefs may be, but who have ideologies that they want to put in this matter. Yet we also have extremists and the opportunity for extremists to have an undue say in the outcome of voting if there is voluntary voting.

In a voluntary voting situation, there will be some people who are extremely committed to a viewpoint followed by others who are strongly committed to a viewpoint but of a more rational persuasion regardless of the political point of view that they have. There is also the apathetic group, but that extremist group will always be there. We do not know what percentage they may represent at this time, although I note that in 1987, when the Hon. Trevor Griffin placed a similar Bill before the Legislative Council, the Hon. Carolyn Pickles identified that at the election prior to that about 4 per cent of the votes went to candidates who may have been deemed to be extremists. In a voluntary voting situation that 4 per cent would have had a magnified effect because the overall turnout would have been reduced quite significantly.

The Premier makes the point that there is no argument for saying that the turnout will be reduced significantly if there is voluntary voting. The facts clearly show the opposite, and I will come back to that point later. We know the situation in Australia. We have compulsory voting in all States of the Commonwealth. That situation has not always applied. Between 1915 and 1942 every State of Australia and the Commonwealth adopted compulsory voting: Queensland in 1915, the Commonwealth in 1924, Victoria in 1926, New South Wales in 1928, Western Australia in 1936 and South Australia in 1942.

I could go through many quotes of people who have spoken on compulsory voting in different Legislatures in this country, but I will not do that. It will suffice to quote one who

spoke on the matter in 1924. Senator Pearce—presumably by now the late Senator Pearce—said:

In my opinion the right to vote is a duty as well as a privilege. . . in a country like Australia where we recognise that every man and woman has the right to vote, that right becomes more than a privilege, it becomes a duty. Hence we declare that the law should compel every citizen to discharge his duty in that connection.

When compulsory voting was introduced in those various Legislatures, including this one, in the years that I have mentioned, one of the key issues that motivated those who supported compulsory voting, and indeed motivated Conservative Governments who supported compulsory voting, was that they feared the Labor movement's organising power. They feared that the Labor movement in this country was more likely to succeed in getting its supporters out to vote in a voluntary voting situation than was the Conservative side of politics. Now, of course, it is ironic that the Conservative side of politics feels that voluntary voting may advantage it. I think the clear bottom line of what the Government is about is to advantage itself in terms of voting for this Parliament. It has a track record—

The Hon. D.S. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: The Minister refers to principle. I point out that he comes from a Party which has an astoundingly bad record in terms of fairness and justice in voting within this State. It was his Party that resisted so long. It hung on against any change to the Upper House and its restricted and unfair franchise. It was his Party that resisted for so long a proper distribution of votes between country and city in the Lower House. When one member of his Party had the honesty and integrity to do something about it, the Hon. Steele Hall, they destroyed him. They went out to get him, and get him they did in terms of getting rid of him from this Parliament and then, in another Parliament, making sure that he never got anywhere there either. He was the one person who had the courage, the guts and the integrity to do something about this matter.

The Premier also referred to the fact that we should follow the example of other countries. I do not know why we have to be followers on an issue like this. Why cannot we as a nation set the trend or the direction that should be followed? We have done it before. This year we are commemorating the centenary of how this Parliament has done it before. This Parliament led the world in providing women with the opportunity to stand for Parliament. It was also amongst the leaders in the world in terms of providing women with the vote. I think it was the fourth Legislature in the world to do that.

I have received a copy of a letter that a former member of this place, the Hon. John Trainer, wrote to the *Advertiser* on this matter. He has been an ardent speaker on this matter. He put the points very well in his letter and I can do little better than read what he said in his letter to the *Advertiser*, as follows:

Dean Brown is quoted as saying in relation to compulsory voting that it is time Australia caught up with other democracies, including those of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada etc. He has it back to front. It is time that they again caught up with us, just as they have had to do with many of the key features of democratic elections pioneered here in Australia, particularly in South Australia.

He then went on to point out just what significant reforms have emanated from this State or this country, as follows:

South Australia instituted a universal adult male franchise without any property requirement for voters in 1857 for the Lower House. It was another 30 or 40 years before those other countries

allowed anyone, other than a select group of wealthy men, to have a vote. That same year, 1857, South Australia's Commissioner Boothby pioneered the secret pre-printed ballot paper in the form that is now used all over the world.

As late as the 1930s one southern US State still required electors to call out their choices to be entered into the poll clerk's book. And up until recently the secret voting method was referred to in America and Europe as the Australian ballot when they adopted it 20 or 30 years after us.

Then, as I mentioned earlier, John Trainer goes on to say:

In 1894 South Australia enfranchised women and qualified them to be elected, and it was to be another 30 or 40 years before women in the USA and the UK were allowed to vote, and some were still disfranchised in some cantons of Switzerland until quite recently.

I thought he put it very well in his last paragraph where he says:

It is an irony of history that in 1994, the centenary year of that great advance in democratic elections, the Liberals are now trying to reduce the number of people who will play a part in the community life with their votes.

One point that is made is that we are unique in having compulsory voting. We are not unique in having compulsory voting. It is true that more countries do not have it than do, but the list of countries which have compulsory voting is quite large. The parliamentary research service has identified the countries that have compulsory voting as follows: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador (which quaintly makes it optional for women but compulsory for men), Egypt, France (where it is compulsory for the Senate), Greece, Guatemala (where it is compulsory only for literate voters), Indonesia, Italy (and I will make some reference to Italy later), Korea, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, some Cantons in Switzerland, Turkey, Venezuela, Zaire and Zambia.

I might refer to the situation in Italy. Italy has had a voluntary voting system until recently but, because of the instability in that system, as members will know, a number of changes have taken place as Italy has sought to stabilise its process of politics. What did it do? It has taken a number of initiatives, one of which—and it is not an accidental or a coincidental initiative but one that Italy believes is important to help stabilise its democracy and to ensure that its legislature truly reflects the will of the people of Italy—is the introduction of compulsory voting as a part of a package of electoral reform. That highlights that, where people are asking themselves the question, 'How can we ensure that there is a proper reflection of the will of the people?', that is the kind of direction in which they really find themselves going when they are being dispassionate about it rather than motivated by base aims, as is presently the case with the legislation that the Liberal Party has brought before this Parliament.

The Premier has been heard to say that, when others and I have said that voluntary voting will reduce the turnout significantly, we are wrong. We have quoted figures, and I will quote them again in a minute to remind members about the United States, and so on. He said, 'You should not look at those examples. It will be much better here when we have voluntary voting. It will be much higher. It will be much closer to what we have presently with the compulsory voting system.'

This has been said by the very person who seeks to ignore the reality of local government voting in this country, where we see very low turnout rates and where local government is patting itself on the back when it gets the participation rate

up to 20 per cent. This is the country where that happens. But, in fact, we also have another set of figures that we can look to in our past that belies the points being made by the Premier. In other words, what actually happened when we had voluntary voting in South Australia? Did people turn out *en masse* to vote, as the Premier assures us they will? Let us look at the three elections before compulsory voting was introduced in South Australia.

The turnout rate for the 1941 election, just before compulsory voting was introduced in South Australia, was 50 per cent, not the 80 per cent that the Premier is talking about.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: In 1938 the figure was higher: I will cite it for the Premier and the member for Ridley. I do not want to be accused of misrepresenting the situation by referring just to the 1941 abysmally low turnout of 50 per cent. I do not want to be unfair about this. In 1938—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I think the member for Ridley still does. In 1938 the turnout figure was 63 per cent. It was higher, but not the 80 per cent the Premier is saying we would have in South Australia. In 1933 the turnout was 59 per cent. So those figures certainly cannot be regarded as representing massive turnouts of people to vote in elections, and certainly the fear that the turnout will drop is a very real one, not only by overseas experience but also by our own experience within this country.

Let us turn to what has been the turnout rate in other parts of the world. If we look at the United States, for example—and the Premier would have us ignore the United States example—we see that there are two important lessons: one relates to the figures by themselves and the second involves the question, ‘What is represented, in a demographic sense, by the turnout patterns in that country?’ The turnout rate for the 1992 presidential election in the United States was 55.9 per cent. Thus President Clinton was effectively elected President by 25.9 per cent of the population eligible to vote. The United Kingdom had a somewhat better turnout rate of 75.8 per cent for the 1992 election. The Conservative Party won 42.8 per cent of all votes cast, and on this basis the Government of Mr John Major was elected by 32.4 per cent of those who were entitled to vote. One in three—

The Hon. D.S. Baker interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I will give the Minister a simple lesson in mathematics. First, what happened after the 1989 election was a redistribution that ensured that the Party winning 50 plus 1 per cent of the votes would be the Party in government. The redistribution after the 1989 election, instituted under a system put in place by the Labor Government, in fact guaranteed that those boundaries would be restructured.

I want to put one other point on the record. The Minister refers to 48 per cent for the 1989 election, but the figure I have just quoted for the UK election of 1992—not 1892 but 1992—indicates that 32.4 per cent of those entitled to vote enabled the formation of the Government of the United Kingdom.

I mention one other point about the effects of the American voter turnout. Not only do we see that the global figures are very low indeed but we see the effective disenfranchisement of large sections of the American population. It has been noted, for example—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD:—by many students of US history that, while the civil war in that country nominally freed black people, giving them the vote, there was quite clear manipulation of the voting system; the non-compulsory voting system was used against the black population of that country to keep them off the register and to ensure that those who were on the register did not exercise their right to vote. There was clear distortion against that section of the population.

Members opposite may say, ‘You are talking about a situation that applied in the last century.’ Of course, we know it did not: it continued to apply into this century, right into the 1950s and 1960s. But even if one wanted to ignore such a travesty of democracy by those who abused voluntary voting against black people in that country, one can see today that a large section of the dispossessed in America, a large section of the poor in America, regardless of race, are those who do not turn out to vote. There are those who feel that there is nothing for them in voting, and they do not vote. The result is that the system does not reflect their aspirations, their wishes or their hopes for Government.

The point may then be made by members opposite, ‘If they do not want to come out and vote, that is their right.’ I want to make the point that the dispossessed of the US are not making a political statement about not voting: they are simply making a statement of apathy or inconvenience about that. If they did participate in that system, we would see a much different American political system than exists.

I want to refer to this business of people not turning out to vote. Are they making a decision, a statement about not voting? Before dealing with that, we should note that under the Australian system at the moment people can do precisely that anyway. First, people can go to the polling booth, have their name crossed off, take the ballot paper and then do pretty much what they want with the ballot paper at that point, and that can be their expression of a formal opinion about a candidate to be elected. In other words, using the preferential system, which in my personal view is an advantage that we have in this country, we can cast a formal vote or we can choose to cast an informal vote. We know that that actually happens. We know that the rate of informal voting goes up and down at various times in various electorates and that a portion of that is a quite deliberate statement by voters that they do not wish to vote for any of the listed candidates.

Those of us who have been involved in scrutineering—not in our own elections but in other elections—would have seen many a ballot paper that has been deliberately defaced by the voter not wishing to make a choice, and that is fine. It is the right of those people to make that choice in the ballot box.

Then there is the other situation where people can still refuse to vote. They get fined for that—hardly a punitive fine, but they do get fined for it. They can make that decision and pay the consequences. That is a matter of civil disobedience that has long been respected; people have the right to do that and pay the penalty for such civil disobedience. The reality is that studies have shown that, in those systems where there is voluntary voting, only a small percentage are choosing not to exercise their vote for political reasons: only about 4 per cent of those not voting do so for political reasons. The document states:

It has been reported that a British survey undertaken in the past few years showed that only 4 per cent of people did not vote out of

principle. The vast majority of those who failed to vote did so merely because it was inconvenient.

I am not apologetic for saying that the inconvenience of somebody else in something as important as defending the democracy should outweigh the obligations on citizens to take part in defending a democracy. I do not have any regrets that I will give them an inconvenience in this matter when it is such an important issue that we are talking about. I think, in fact, that that is quite reasonable that we should not have a distorted result being reflected in the voting of the Houses of this Parliament by those for whom it was just too much trouble to go along and cast a vote, giving us a distorted make-up in the membership of this Chamber. That to my mind is not an adequate way of dealing with it.

There are other issues that we should address in this matter. First, I note the arguments put very powerfully indeed by the Hon. Chris Sumner in another place. He too identified the issue of rights and duties; he too cited the figure for the very low turnout in the US; and he too made the point that a democracy must concern itself with social integration as well as the issue of individual rights. He made the point in an article he wrote on this matter that some who have attacked compulsory voting have said that campaigning methodologies in a compulsory voting situation make cheap use of television commercials, the 30 second news grab, just trying to get a punchy message across and hoping to influence the non-committed in politics so that when they come to the vote they will simply cast a cheap vote—I guess that is the implication of those who raise that argument. Yet anyone who has had the chance actually to see the political commercials that take place in the US where voting is voluntary will realise that that argument has no legs whatsoever. It is an argument that falls flat very seriously because, if ever there was cheap shot political advertising, it is what takes place in some of the campaigns in places such as the United States.

Another point is what should be happening in terms of the energies of political Parties to win votes at election time. What are elections supposed to be about? They are supposed to be about the putting of ideas and ideologies before the electorate to say, 'These are the views we have as opposed to the views they have about who should govern this State or whatever area you care to talk about. Let us argue about those policies.' At the last election my Party put forward a wide range of policies—as comprehensive a range of policies as we have seen for many a year. They were voted on by the electorate, as we know, and were not accepted by the electorate. They voted us out of office. But that is what campaigning comes down to—putting ideas, policies and ideologies before the electorate.

In a compulsory voting situation, that is where the focus remains: it remains on those precise issues—what is it you are going to do and what are the policies you will put in place? In a voluntary voting situation, as experience shows us all too well, particularly in places such as the United Kingdom, where does the political energy go? The political energy goes into driving the vehicles to take people to the polling booths, to ensure that they actually get out—not into arguing the case, not into putting an ideology, but simply into putting people on seats in buses to take them to the polling booth. Frankly, I do not think that the Government of the next four years (or whatever parliamentary term applies) should be decided simply by who are the better logisticians in terms of those who can actually get more people from A to B in a certain time. That is hardly the way to determine the real

directions of this State. There are many arguments I could detail on this issue and all my colleagues will be speaking on it; they will cover a number of those positions.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I actually missed the response of the member for Ridley, but if members opposite want—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: First, democratic government means majority rule and the expression of opinion by a majority of electors. When the system does not reasonably provide that, it should be modified. We did that with the redistribution measures that have taken place in this State. We are the ones who pushed so hard for that, with the support of the Hon. Steele Hall, who also pushed very hard for it, so it is a very odd argument that suggests that, when 32.4 per cent of people in England elect the Prime Minister or the governing Party—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Back to basics!

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: Very much back to basics there, that is right. And when 25.9 per cent of the people of the United States elect the President of that country, it is a pretty hollow argument to suggest that that means majority rule, because the reality is that the majority did not vote for him. The majority voted for somebody else or did something else, so anyone who says that Bill Clinton has won power as a result of majority rule, when he got 25.9 per cent of the vote—one out of four of the potential votes in that country—is being specious indeed. Faith in the legitimacy of government is often weakened by figures such as that. People in the American and UK electorates do not feel great respect for a system that allows that to happen.

I have said that voting as a duty is as important as such duties as jury service, paying taxes and, may I say, attending compulsory education. I am amazed that the Premier has not raised the point as to why people should have to attend school in this fit of his to give people the right to do what they want. Why should they have to go to school between certain ages? Surely this is an infringement on the rights of young people. This is actually an attack upon youth, according to this kind of argument.

An honourable member: When you look at some of these new backbenchers, perhaps some of them didn't.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: That could well be right. As we know, and as I have said before, the voter is not compelled to vote for anyone. An informal vote can always be registered. The voter is merely compelled to go to the polling booth, and protest ballots often take place.

The Premier is attempting to suggest that people are weighed down with the burden of compulsory voting, that their lives are seriously impaired by compulsory voting, that they are much the worse for this and that this really makes their life bleak. I certainly agree that there is much about Government regulation that should be cleared away. When we were in government, we had a very good record of clearing away a large swath of regulations from the regulation book. We were the ones who introduced the position of deregulation adviser. We were the ones who went through a rigorous process of taking regulations off the statute book.

Many regulations do weigh people down, but what are we talking about in this situation? We are talking of a requirement of part of one day every four years. It does not take everyone all day to vote, so we are not talking even about a full day but about as long as it takes people to get from their home to the polling booth, through the queue, putting the

ballot paper in the ballot box and getting home again. That is the inconvenience and burden—the bleak day effect that the Premier is talking about—which happens once every four years. I feel very sorry for people who find that hard because, if that is the hardest thing they ever have to suffer—a part of one day every four years—I do not know what world they are living in.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It's hardly a living hell.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: Yes, it is hardly a living hell if that is as tough as their life gets. What are we asking of them in this portion of one day every four years? We are simply asking that they defend the democracy. There are many arguments, but I am conscious of the fact—

Members interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Norwood is interjecting out of his seat.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Bass): There have been so many interjections during the Leader of the Opposition's speech that it is hard to know who is interjecting. If the member for Norwood has been interjecting, I suggest that he return to his seat and, if he does that, I suggest he should not further interject. The Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: There are many other arguments that I am more than willing to share but I know that my colleagues themselves will also be detailing the arguments. I want to finish on the point that this is no light issue. This matter received references in the Government's policy speech before the last election, but there was never any attempt by the then Liberal Opposition to argue the merits or demerits of the proposal. There was never any concerted public debate on this matter, and I would have thought that surely that is what should have happened, that there should have been lengthy public debate on it, but that was not what the then Opposition did.

It just slipped this matter in its policy speech and it got a bit of a run now and again; it got some attention on one day in the election campaign and that was it. The Government now suggests that that gives it the right to just sweep aside a long and proud tradition of this State in guaranteeing that, as far as possible, this Legislature will reflect the will of the people, that as far as possible the Government of this State will truly be the Government of the majority of the people of this State—all people.

I just do not believe that that argument holds water, and I hope the Bill is rejected by the Parliament. It may not be rejected by this Chamber because I know that, although there are many members opposite who may query the baseness of the motives of the Premier in this matter, they will not have the courage to cross the floor and vote with us. While it is possible and highly likely that the Bill will pass in this Chamber, I certainly hope that another place—that democratically elected House that represents the will of the people—will seriously consider the matter and reject the legislation. Then we can get back to what are the important issues in this State, and they are not trying to manipulate the political system, which is surely what the Government is trying to do.

The Government is trying to get its sticky fingers once more into the politics of this State to its own advantage, as it has done time and time—

Mr BRINDAL: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Governor and not the Government, and I do not think he would have meant to do that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The Hon. LYNN ARNOLD: I did not say 'Governor'. If it came across in that way, I merely clarify that that was not what I was saying. I was referring to the Government's sticky fingers and I note that the member for Unley did not take exception to that. Perhaps he is one Government member who will have the courage to cross the floor on this matter. I ask that members consider long and hard the gains that South Australians have made in being given a system that is democratic, in being given a system that recognises the obligations upon citizens to defend their democracy, to be given a system where the majority will is expressed in Government—not the voices of the minority or the voices of extremists but the majority will—and recognises that these are not lightly to be dealt with, not to be simply cast aside for base political motives. I ask all members in this place to oppose the Bill, and I certainly hope they do so both here and in another place.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): Many of the things that have been heard over the years in this Chamber have been historically significant. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, many have found their way around the world, and he alluded to the full adult suffrage Bill of 1894 as being one of them. In his speech he said that this is no light issue, and in that every member of the House would concur. This is probably to be one of the most significant debates of this Parliament because it touches, as the Leader of the Opposition said, on the very definitions of democracy and the way in which a democracy should work.

Therefore, it is a pity that we were, according to the Leader of the Opposition, in the dark at the beginning of his speech, and I would contend to the House that we are equally in the dark now. The Leader contributed little of substance and much of shadow to the debate. He talks of the base motives of the Government, but let him not talk in this place about base motives. I would remind all members that twice since supposedly we have had this wonderful system of government, which was largely caught on Dunstan's 'one vote, one value' catchcry, a Liberal Opposition has won more than 50 per cent of the popular vote.

Bruce Eastick in his time won more than 50 per cent of the popular vote and was denied the Treasury benches. John Olsen won more than 50 per cent of the popular vote and was denied the Treasury benches. Why was that? Because of Don Dunstan's catchcry 'one vote, one value', which people took simplistically and believed. Then he drew the fences in such a way that seat after seat of Liberal constituency had about 70 per cent Liberal supporters but no Labor seat had much more than 65 per cent of Labor supporters. The paddocks were carefully drawn to spread the Labor vote, to make some Labor seats safe and to maximise the Labor vote throughout South Australia and to pen in the Liberal vote.

That was from a Government that followed Steele Hall's courageous initiative of reforming the electoral boundaries. Steele Hall reformed the electoral boundaries, Don Dunstan came along and said, 'One vote, one value', and I contend that he used that catchcry to cheat the electorate of South Australia. If that is not the case, let members opposite in this debate say why they felt it was necessary in the last Parliament to introduce the criteria that a Government that had 50 per cent of the vote was entitled to hold Government.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: The member for Spence says it was a mistake. The member for Spence was sitting in this Parliament on the Treasury benches and there is no record in

Hansard of his standing up to the Government saying that that was a mistake then. He has the typical benefit of hindsight; he is always 100 per cent right, and generally so after the event and after those who kept him in line in the last Government have now gone and he sits on the front bench. If that is not hypocrisy, I do not know what is.

So, we face an Opposition that can say to us, 'This is unfair'—an Opposition which after 20 years of stealing government in at least two cases can still contend that it is the arbitrator of what is fair and democratic. The arguments of the Leader of the Opposition are always a pleasure to listen to, but they are often as they were today—carefully boxed, neatly if superficially wrapped and generally, as the old song says, filled with ticky-tacky. If members analysed what he said today—and I am sure that many members in this Chamber did so—they would see that there was very little of substance. He is very like the six wise blind men from Hindustan who were given the task of describing an elephant: they each felt a different part of the elephant.

Mr QUIRKE: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, can you direct the honourable member's attention to the fact that this is a voluntary voting Bill and not something from Hindustan or any other place.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I do not believe there is a point of order. The honourable member merely made a comment.

Mr BRINDAL: Each felt only part of the beast and therefore drew radically wrong conclusions. That is the trap that the Leader of the Opposition carefully fell into today. He talked about an unfair franchise. I do not know quite what he meant by that, but I would ask all members to consider whether a single member electorate is necessarily a fair franchise. That is the current system, by which we were all elected, but very compelling arguments can certainly be put forward to the effect that the single member electorate system is not a fair form of franchise itself.

So, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to come in here and talk about what is fair and unfair, let him examine the whole proposition, not little bits of it. Let him not be selective about what he wants to believe is fair and unfair. Let him examine the whole system and give it a shake-up from top to bottom, and not come in here and protest against something and accuse this Government of base motives when I suspect he might be more worried about what he perceives to be the impact on the Party which he represents.

That is a baseless fear, because when this measure comes into effect I am sure it will have ramifications for every politician and every political Party, and I feel equally sure that some of us will get a shock. It is popularly said that non-compulsory voting will favour the Party that I am proud to represent. I do not know that it will: I will be interested to see how our Party's vote and that of the Labor Party at the next election is affected by voluntary voting. I do not for a minute assume that the Party opposite will be the only one to suffer under a system of voluntary voting. However, that does not mean that it should not be implemented and that this Government does not have a franchise to do it.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Carolyn Pickles mentioned 4 per cent of extremists, and the Leader of the Opposition said that if we have non-compulsory voting all these sane, sensible normal people will not go to vote and all the lunatic fringe will turn out, so the effect of the extremists will be magnified. He seemed convinced of that.

I do not understand his logic, because I believe that some extremist groups would not bother to attend the polls and

vote. So, I put to the House that, where non-compulsory voting applies, the extremists will not necessarily attend in any greater numbers than the proportions that are reflected in the polls at present.

As was reported to some members in a private meeting in this House (and the member for Spence heard this, and will correct me if I am wrong), matters could reach those of San Francisco, where I believe the gay vote—

Mr Atkinson: You mean the homosexual vote.

Mr BRINDAL: I will defer to the honourable member. The homosexual vote in San Francisco is about 20 per cent, and apparently they are a very well organised lobby group which turns out in such force that they have a more than large say in the civic affairs of that city. The person who was addressing members of this House expressed that as a worry.

Mr Atkinson: Is there something wrong with them voting?

Mr BRINDAL: I was about to make the point that of course there is nothing wrong with them voting. The point I was about to make is that if a minority group turns out to vote in force there is an easy way to make sure that the will of the majority of people is heard, and that is for the majority to turn out and vote. If the situation as reported is correct, an easy remedy is for those people to turn out in their numbers to vote and effect good government in that city.

The Leader of the Opposition often pointed out in his speech that it is not a privilege but a duty to vote. If it is a duty and not a privilege to vote, I challenge the Opposition to tell us how we can exempt some classes of people from that duty. We simply say to people when they reach a certain age, 'You may now choose to vote, voluntarily or not.' The member for Spence can be flippant about it, but if it is a duty why should we say to somebody, when it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age according to the statute law of this Parliament, 'Because you have attained an age you no longer need to vote'?

Mr Atkinson: Do we say that?

Mr BRINDAL: You do say that, because you do not compel them to attend a polling booth after a certain age. They have a voluntary right. If that is the case—

Mr Atkinson: Is it a statute or a regulation?

Mr BRINDAL: It is a statute, and I would suggest that if the honourable member wants to debate this Bill he should do some homework first and not waste my time by asking me all the questions that he is quite capable of looking up himself. Therefore, we do exempt some classes of people, and that amply demonstrates that it is not a duty, as contended by the Leader of the Opposition so suddenly: it is in fact a privilege and it should remain a privilege. I for one find it abhorrent and abysmal that people who are serving time in gaol can be given the right to vote, and I would go on the record as saying that I believe that people detained in gaol should not have the right to vote, because while they are detained at Her Majesty's pleasure they forfeit the right to equal participation in our society and therefore should not be able to vote. So, far from seeing voting as a duty, I quite clearly see it as a privilege which we should enjoy and which we should take very seriously.

Members opposite very carefully avoid raising one issue which I know is important for them all, and that is the issue of people being informed when they come to exercise their right to vote. All members of this House and I are greatly worried when it is possible to go up to an elector in the street on the day before an election and point out that we are the candidate and the elector can be unsure whether it is a State

or Federal election, and even more importantly they can be quite oblivious as to who is their State member of Parliament, when that member of Parliament is a Minister of the Crown and has been a member of Parliament for some 11 years.

That is not restricted to either side of politics. Every member in this House will know that it happens in every electorate in this State, and it happens more often than any of us would wish. Under the present system, that person is compelled to attend the polling booth and generally will go into the booth and vote. I cannot see that that is an informed vote. I cannot see that that type of vote assists a democracy.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: The Deputy Leader says that that is elitist. I put it to the Deputy Leader that with every privilege I know comes a responsibility. If you want the privilege of voting, you have the responsibility of informing yourself. If members opposite do not believe that voters have a responsibility that goes with the privilege of voting, let them say so.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have been more than tolerant with the member for Spence. I ask him not to interject any more.

Mr BRINDAL: I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that it is our duty to defend the institution of democracy. I challenge members opposite, in the light of their Leader's comments, to stand up and say, 'Our Leader said it is our duty to defend democracy, but it is not our duty to be informed; it is not our duty to cast an informed vote.' If they want the kind of democracy where you might as well let the member for Ridley's sheep vote, it is not the sort of democracy which will be conducive to the best Government for this State.

When non-compulsory voting is introduced into this State it will be interesting to analyse, from areas where non-compulsory voting does occur, whether the result would be any different if the turnout were any larger. I am not an expert on statistics but I know with certain samples that, if the sample represents a cross-section of the population, the wish of that sample reflects the wishes of the whole population. It would be interesting to analyse that. I would be interested in any argument from members opposite that suggests that the results of the American or UK elections would have been different had there been a full turnout of voters.

The one thing that members opposite do not seem to worry about—they are very sensitive about being honourable, and it is a new found sensitivity since they lost Government—is the fact that we did not have any lengthy public debate. This issue has been in the Liberal Party's policy for many years. How much public debate do they want? The Leader said, 'We do not want it swept aside'. There are some changes that you cannot make incrementally. You either have non-compulsory voting or you do not. You cannot do it incrementally; we either do this thing or we do not. There are two choices. It has clearly been part of our policy and it is something we should try.

Unlike members opposite, I totally believe in a democracy and I believe that voting is a privilege. I think that the first exercise of a democrat right is to choose to exercise the right to vote. That is what is fundamental to this argument; nothing else. Provided we have full adult franchise, which we have, we can choose to attend a polling booth and choose to vote. That is the essence of a democracy. I am sorry the member for Giles is not here—because he is an avowed socialist. He has often thought of processes which occur in socialist states. I would have pointed out to him, were he here, that in the

USSR there was never any full adult franchise. You had to be a card carrying member of the party to vote, and they were very careful about that.

I repeat: in our democracy everyone has the privilege to vote, and everybody has the right to exercise that privilege. That is the true essence of a democracy. I hope that, when non-compulsory voting comes in, we might see a group of people attending the polls because they want to exercise the privilege, not because they are compelled to attend. If members opposite are so keen on compulsory voting, why did they not make voting compulsory when they were in Government? Why did they leave it so that it was only compulsory to attend the polling booth?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): It is rather strange to follow the member for Unley who cannot win a ballot, voluntary or compulsory, in his own Party room to be a member of the Printing Committee. A number of things have been said. The honourable member implied that an IQ test needs to be applied before people can vote. In terms of the numbers they currently have on that side of the house—and there is no doubt there is a massive increase in numbers—it seems to indicate that the average IQ has dropped significantly since Jennifer Cashmore left their ranks.

My first political memory was at the age of six in the 1959 UK election which saw Harold Macmillan pitched against Hugh Gaitskell. As a six year old I was with my parents campaigning for the Labour Party in a safe Tory seat. Our local member of Parliament was Edward Heath. I recall that an old Ford Anglia was used to ferry people to the polling booth, and alongside us at the polling booth were several Rolls Royces with blue ribbons that were ferrying supporters for the other side. Most of the activity was about transport arrangements for each side. It was not about convincing people but about identifying who were your natural voters on either side and who could lay on the most transport.

Ten years ago in the United States I spent five and a half weeks as an observer on a variety of election campaigns. I saw Ronald Reagan's victory over Walter Mondale for the Presidency; I saw Booth Gardiner's democratic victory for Governor in Washington State; I saw John Kerry's successful first run to be the Democrat Party's second US Senator for Massachusetts; and I also sat in on a couple of congressional and mayoral campaigns.

The firm, clear message I received from visiting the United States was that, under a voluntary system of voting, the main concern of electoral politics in that country was to raise hundreds of millions of dollars and spend that money on turning out the vote—not on informing, not on persuading voters about issues or policies, but on getting them to turn up at the polling booth. In the presidential elections that I observed in 1984 and 1988, about 50 per cent of the eligible vote turned out, even though it was a presidential election. Indeed, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, in the last presidential election in 1992, President Clinton was effectively elected by about 26 per cent of the eligible vote. In one congressional race I saw, there was a turnout of just over 30 per cent in the first past the post voluntary voting system, and the winner in that race received a tiny proportion of the eligible vote.

Indeed, I was told that during elections in the distant past in Oakland, California, \$2 bills were handed out to convince people to vote. Of course, the same thing has occurred in a number of United Kingdom elections. In 1970 Harold

Wilson, the Prime Minister of the day, expected to win but there was rain on voting day and a poor turnout resulted. That is why in British opinion polls a turnout filter is always applied. Around London 45 per cent to 50 per cent turnout is normal.

The philosophical rationale for this Bill is fraudulent. The Premier and the Attorney-General have tried to sell the message that this Bill is an important reform designed to enhance the political process and democracy by emphasising choice. The Premier says that he is pro choice. However, we have been told that the ability to choose whether to vote or not is a 'basic democratic right', and that is why this Bill has been introduced. That is a scam, and every member of this Parliament knows that it is a scam.

One simple reason exists for this Bill, namely, to enhance the Premier's own political Party's position. I refer to the Premier's high flown rhetoric, as follows:

The right to vote should be taken seriously, but there is no reason to make it a dull, boring and onerous responsibility under pain of penalty for not attending at the polling booth and marking one's name off the list. Voluntary voting will add some vigour to the electoral process.

So the Premier said. The fact that has been ignored time and again in debate on this issue is that no duty is placed on a voting aged citizen in South Australia to vote for a particular candidate or political Party. Indeed, in this State we already have voluntary enrolment, and there is absolutely no compulsion on a person to cast a valid vote. People can leave the voting paper blank or mark it in some other way. Writing the name 'Mickey Mouse' will not elect the Premier or the member for Unley. So, the discussion of rights misses the point.

In Britain we have been told that 25 per cent of those eligible to vote do not turn up on election day. As the Leader of the Opposition said, a major survey in the United Kingdom showed that only 4 per cent of people made a choice not to vote out of some kind of conscientious principle. So, the vast majority who failed to vote did so merely because it was inconvenient. So, contrary to the Liberal Party's claim, voluntary voting not only tolerates but actively encourages apathy and non participation. In contrast, compulsory voting ensures that citizens exercise their responsibility and actively discourages apathy. So, again, why are we really debating this Bill? What is it really about?

I appeal to those with any understanding of politics, and particularly the new member for Coles whose husband was a major reformer in the area of democracy and was punished for doing so. I want to see her on the front bench of this Government because she has so much more ability than some of the time servers. However, I am told that there is an 18 month transition period. She knows, I know, and every member of this House knows that there is only one reason behind the Premier's Bill, namely, to give an advantage to the Liberal Party not only at the next election but at successive elections.

The member for Fawcett Towers, who keeps getting into strife with the Speaker, has again left this Chamber, but we will invite him back because we enjoy a bit of fun on a Wednesday afternoon. This Bill is the 1994 equivalent of Tom Playford's gerrymander—

Mr CAUDELL: On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I understand that the Deputy Leader referred to a seat. I wonder whether that seat exists. Are you aware of it, Sir?

The ACTING SPEAKER: I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to address members by their district. I do not believe that there is any such district as the one referred to.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am referring to our friend and colleague the member for Unley. I am his numbers man at the moment, acting actively to get him and the member for Coles on the front bench where they belong. This Bill is the 1994 equivalent of Tom Playford's gerrymander. It is the 1994 equivalent of the old system of giving votes only to people who own land. It is a crude attempt to fix our voting system in order to guarantee a semi-permanent Liberal majority. That is the intention. There is no other reason: the Premier knows that and I am sure his colleagues are prepared to concede that fact in private. It is a scam and a crude attempt to manipulate the system in order to get the best result for the Liberals.

There has been a great deal said, written and implied that somehow Australia is on its own in having compulsory voting. That is also not true. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a number of countries—I understand there are about 29—that currently have compulsory voting. There are fundamental reasons why compulsory voting deserves support. Those were enunciated by Liberal MPs in a variety of States and Territories and in the Federal Parliament in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

I believe that there is a clear obligation on and of citizens to participate in the democratic process. The right to vote is the very basis of our democratic society. The right to vote is the fundamental building block of all truly democratic societies. A democratically elected Government should mean that the majority rules. It is impracticable to get a real consensus and estimate of what a community believes, regardless of who should represent them in the Parliament, unless adult citizens are under a duty to record their vote. In that way we can always ensure that the Parliament that is elected truly represents the will of the people, not just the will of the few who turn out to vote, as would occur if we returned to voluntary voting.

Let us remember that before South Australia introduced compulsory voting in 1942, a large slab of eligible voters failed to vote. Let us also remember that in the United States, Great Britain and other countries where voluntary voting is in force, those who do not vote tend to be low income citizens, minority groups and the poor. In the United States it is estimated that only one in four low income citizens votes. Therefore, voluntary voting would be a move further to alienate low income people from our democratic system. That is why the Premier wants to introduce voluntary voting. He has no concerns about democratic rights; he has no concerns about energising political Parties or the electorate; his sole motive is that he hopes voluntary voting will ensure that a significant proportion of low income citizens in this State will follow those in the United States and Great Britain and not turn out on election day, therefore helping conservative Parties. His argument about democratic rights is a sham, and he knows it.

Many things in life are compulsory duties of citizenship. The Leader of the Opposition said that as a society we insist that citizens pay taxes to pay for health, education, roads, police and other services. We also make it compulsory for children to attend school to protect their interests. We insist that citizens undertake jury duty, we insist that witnesses give evidence in court and we insist that when our nation is in peril citizens perform compulsory military service. We do not hear the Liberals arguing for an end to jury duty or making the wearing of seat belts voluntary. We do not hear the Premier

arguing for voluntary taxation or voluntary observation of the road rules or voluntary attendance at school. However, we do hear the Liberals currently talking about a bit of a fix that they made with some motor traders in response to a \$100 000 donation and we hear them talking about compulsory, not voluntary, motor vehicle inspections. They do not want voting to be too onerous, but we have seen a situation—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Exactly. I believe there can be no more important civic duty than the duty to vote. In my view, adult citizens in this State have a basic fundamental duty to attend the polling booth and either express or decline to express a view about who is elected to govern. To me, that is more important than some of the other things that we deem to be compulsory to make our system of government, democracy and laws work.

If we make sure that people express a view or decline to express a view at the polling booths, there can in that way be no alibis or excuses that the elected members of Parliament and the elected Government are not truly representative. Democratic government means a majority rule and the expression of the opinion by the majority of electors. That cannot be properly achieved if a significant number of electors do not vote. Faith in the legitimacy of government and confidence in legitimacy of institutions such as this Parliament will always be weakened if it is seen that the Government or members of Parliament are elected by a minority. There will always be the accusation that they were never elected by all of us and that they are not there to serve the majority.

It is quite clear that in this year of all years, when we celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of universal suffrage, we should reflect on how hard won that right has been. The universal franchise has been hard fought for and must be used. We are celebrating that valiant struggle on behalf of women to be entitled to vote and to stand for Parliament 100 years ago. These hard-won rights in my view impose duties and clear obligations on all citizens. Compulsion emphasises the responsibilities of electors to undertake their democratic duties.

The Hon. Len King, the Chief Justice of South Australia, when he was Attorney-General of the State in 1973, said:

Yes, I believe in democracy; but by that I mean the right of the majority of the people to determine who shall represent them in Parliament. There is no way of ascertaining the will of the majority of the people except by imposing a legal obligation on citizens to record their wishes through their vote. This has been accepted by all political Parties in Australia for the greater part of this country's political history.

Of course, Professor Colin Hughes, the former Australian Electoral Commissioner, has argued that the true opinion of the people cannot be shown unless most, and preferably all, of the people vote.

I have worked on campaigns in countries where voluntary voting applies. I have worked on campaigns in the United States and in New Zealand. In New Zealand I can remember 500 cars in the 1972 and 1975 elections being used to ferry people to the polling booth in one electorate. Because they could be checked off against the roll sequentially throughout the day, people who had not yet voted were visited four, and in some cases five, times on election day in order to drag them into voting. There is no doubt that voluntary voting increases the likelihood of inducements and undue influences being offered to voters. Let me quote from the distinguished Australian political and parliamentary journalist, Laurie

Oakes who, writing in the *Bulletin* just a few years ago, said that Australian political Parties:

... have been able to concentrate resources on persuading people how to vote, not why they should bother trekking to the polling booth in the first place. In the United States—where, as in most other democracies, voting is voluntary—huge effort goes into cajoling reluctant voters to the polling booths. Methods range from computerised mail and phone calls to such things as chauffeured transport which come close to bribes.

Mr Oakes goes on to say in that article:

I am one who believes a system where 95 per cent of adults vote is more democratic than one in which 50 per cent vote. . . if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

This is a very important Bill. Government members no longer regard it as an important Bill because they were confident they were going to win an extra position in the Upper House, and that meant that they could rig the electoral process to assist themselves. They were denied that in the Legislative Council by the clear will of the people.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That is outrageous. You are a sleazebag. That is an outrageous statement.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: For the Minister to call me a sleazebag is rather extraordinary.

Mr BRINDAL: Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The member for Unley, of course, did not want me to say that it is a crooked system—a crooked attempt to rig the vote.

An honourable member: Sit down, you clown.

Mr BRINDAL: On a point of order, Sir, time had expired for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do not know whether you had noticed that.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Point taken. I call the member for Mitchell.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I ask the Minister to withdraw his comment. He seems to be a bit emotional, if not tired. I would like him to withdraw that comment.

The ACTING SPEAKER: To what comment is the honourable member referring?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Sleazebag and clown, repeated several times.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I do not consider that to be parliamentary language and I would ask the Minister to withdraw the comment.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Mr Acting Speaker, if the honourable member feels that the comments were directed in his direction, so be it.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: On a point of order, Sir, the Minister either withdraws or he does not withdraw.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: There is nothing to withdraw.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I call on the Minister to withdraw his statements.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader will sit down. I ask the Minister to withdraw the comments.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Mr Acting Speaker, if the honourable member feels the comments were directed at him, so be it. It is not for me to be responsible for how it is interpreted.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw the comment.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Have the guts to withdraw.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: There is nothing to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I would suggest to the Minister that he should withdraw the remarks. I heard them and I consider that they were unparliamentary, and if he does not withdraw them he is aware of the consequences. I ask the Minister to withdraw.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: In the interests of continuing with the business of the House, I withdraw, to make the honourable member happy.

Mr CAUDELL (Mitchell): It is amazing what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister to withdraw. The Deputy Leader made many scurrilous remarks during his speech. He also made a variety of suggestions with regard to the Government. He made suggestions about the propriety of the Government in the way it conducts elections; he mentioned its having 'sticky fingers' in the process; and he mentioned a rigging of the election processes. It is amazing that he had the audacity—the person referred to in this House as 'the fabricator'—to stand up and ask a Minister of the Crown to withdraw a remark that, unfortunately, I did not hear from this end of the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! Could I suggest to the honourable member that he is not linking his remarks to the matter before the Chair; I suggest that he refer his remarks to the Bill.

Mr CAUDELL: I appreciate your ruling, Mr Speaker, but I was rebutting some of the points that the honourable member made in his speech. All those points were made in his speech over the previous 20 minutes. That is why I was referring to those remarks.

The Bill before us was part of the election policy of this Government. It was enunciated during the election process, especially during the campaign launch held at the Thebarton Theatre. During that launch our policy with regard to the voting process was enunciated, and at no stage did the then Government (the now Opposition) raise a voice, not even a whimper, about our policy on the ending of compulsory voting. I repeat that for the benefit of the member for Spence, because he was not listening too carefully (obviously, he has a hearing problem and I refer him to the Government doctor to have his ears cleaned out): at no stage did the members of the then Government raise even a whimper.

They said it was not even debated during the election process. We raised the subject and laid it on the table for the election process, for the people of South Australia to discuss. Not once did the then Government decide to run with it, because it obviously realised that the people of South Australia were quite *au fait* with an end to compulsory voting and were quite happy with it, because they returned us with a resounding mandate to carry out the programs that we included in our campaign launch.

When introducing this Bill on 24 February the Premier talked about democracies of this globe that have the right to vote; the right to choose; the right for people to make up their mind whether they want to take part in the democratic process of turning up to vote at an election. He mentioned the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany—and if the member for Spence is not quite clear with regard to them I will go over them again for him: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany; some of the great democracies of this world, and now some of the newer democracies of the Eastern European countries.

And then we have Canada and New Zealand, where the Deputy Opposition Leader chases his sheep in his gum boots. The Premier mentioned these great democracies, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who mentioned the lesser known democracies. We brought up the democracies where people turn up to vote if they so desire. That is part of democracy. Elections are based on the right to vote, not on being forced to vote. Yesterday we saw members of the Opposition wearing their rosettes acknowledging 100 years of women's suffrage, yesterday being International Women's Day. They actually supported the right of women to vote, and when we look in the dictionary—of which the member for Spence is a great reader—

Mr Brindal: A voyeur of the dictionary!

Mr CAUDELL: A voyeur of the dictionary, as the member for Unley so rightly points out. As the member for Spence would read in the dictionary, the word 'right' is defined to mean freedom: the freedom to vote. If we also look at 'compulsion', that means by regulation, the fact that you are forced. It was 100 years ago yesterday that the women of South Australia won the freedom to vote. They did not have a compulsion to vote. They were not required by regulation to vote. The Opposition acknowledged that situation yesterday by wearing their rosettes into this Chamber to acknowledge the fact that they supported the situation where people have the right and the freedom to vote, the freedom to make up their own mind.

Mr Brindal: I thought they were all coming back from the Mardi Gras!

Mr CAUDELL: I thought they had a group booking back from Sydney, as the member for Unley suggests. When there are only 10 of them, they do get a cheap rate on flights back from Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CAUDELL: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, a small diversion.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There are only nine of them now.

Mr CAUDELL: That is right. Most probably two of them had to go twice to get the discount fare! I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. Members of the Opposition talk about the right to vote. At no particular stage are we suggesting that we will not allow people to vote. It is not a situation of turning around and saying to people, 'I am sorry, as a result of changing the law, you can no longer vote.' That is not what we are talking about. One would get the impression from the half an hour of rhetoric we heard from the Leader of the Opposition and the 20 minutes of further rhetoric from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that somehow we would follow the trade union policies of the Clerks Union, etc., and possibly stop people from voting. One would assume that that is what we are about to introduce.

But no, this Bill is about the freedom for people to choose. It is very hard to understand what their objections are, because they have sat in this House as the Government over the previous 11 years and sat over an Act which did not force people to enrol. If they look at section 29 of the Electoral Act, they will see that it gives people the right to choose whether or not they want to enrol to vote. They are not forced to enrol.

Mr Brindal: Hypocritical!

Mr CAUDELL: Very hypocritical, as the member for Unley says. It is an extremely hypocritical stance taken by the member for Spence and the member for Ramsay.

Mr Atkinson: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, not the member for Ramsay.

Mr CAUDELL: Excuse me. When somebody goes racing after sheep with gumboots, I sometimes wonder. Under section 29 of the Electoral Act, we have the situation where people are not forced to enrol. This Bill basically fixes up that situation. It rights a wrong, so to speak, in allowing people the right to vote.

If that is taken one stage further, at no stage does the Electoral Commissioner send out a letter to young people when they turn 18 and say, 'Whoopie, you are now on the electoral roll, you have to vote.' At no stage does somebody receive something from the Births, Deaths and Marriages Office, saying, 'You have now turned 18, whoopie, it is time for you to vote.' At no particular stage are you required to enrol to vote. This Bill takes that situation one stage further, whereby a person does not have to turn up to vote. There is no compulsion to enrol. This Bill will provide that there is no compulsion on any person to vote.

The reference to local government elections has been raised previously. It has been stated that the lower turnout with regard to local government elections is because voting at those elections is not compulsory.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr CAUDELL: Normally there is no Party politics, but I can assure the member for Unley that, if he looks at what happens in the city of Marion in the next election, he will see a very big turnout of the people in the West ward area, because they are very concerned about the quality of the members in that particular electorate, one of whom happens to be a Labor member who is bringing Labor policies into local government. I am referring to Councillor Bruce Hull, who happens to be a shop steward for St John Ambulance and a very strong campaign worker for the Labor party. Getting back to the debate—

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I draw your attention to the relevance of the remarks of the member for Mitchell.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Mitchell has stretched his debate around the subject rather than through it. I ask him to return to the subject of the debate, and I would remind the member that it is not usually the practice of people in the House to refer to people, corporate bodies and such outside the House in an invidious way, and I hope the member will keep his remarks on the proper course.

Mr CAUDELL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for that direction. Due to my newness in this House, I was so overcome with enthusiasm about this great Bill with regard to the ending of compulsory voting that I actually got carried away slightly on that subject.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can assure the honourable member that he may be carried away in a different manner if he does not return to the subject of the debate.

Mr CAUDELL: I appreciate that the question of voter turnout has been raised during the debate, but the problems that occur in local government elections relate to the lack of issues and the lack of opposition, as we have here before us today. Misunderstanding can also occur in relation to the ability of people to vote—whether it be a ratepayer or a resident who is entitled to vote. The location of the polling booths also raises other problems.

With the end of compulsory voting we will have a new phase in the education process with regard to elections, political Parties, policies and so on. The installation of polling booths in shopping centres, at which people can vote much more easily, will probably occur. Hopefully, we will have a good Opposition, which will get out and enunciate its

policies—something like the extremely good Opposition prior to the election of 11 December 1993, which enunciated very well its policies, which were accepted by the people of South Australia.

At no stage will the electorate be disfranchised. Private enterprise people will be given the right to vote and the right to choose. During the speech made previously by the Leader of the Opposition, he mentioned the obligation of people to vote in order to save a democracy, and that is a very fine and noble tradition. Whether it be associated with military service or with voting, there is an obligation for people to save and fight for democracy. There is no compulsion for a person to save, to fight or to vote for a democracy: there is an obligation on them to do it. They are two different words with two different meanings. We are talking about an end to the compulsion to vote and the beginning of an era where people have the right to vote—a right for people to join in and look at the obligations that they should uphold with regard to people saving a democracy.

It is amazing that at no stage during the debate today has anyone from the Opposition mentioned the situation with regard to the trade unions. At no stage has the Opposition fought for an end to the right to vote and the start for compulsion to vote for trade unions. It is an extremely hypocritical argument used by the Opposition in this debate. At this stage we are talking not about taking away the right to vote but about giving people the freedom to exercise their point of view at the ballot box. We are taking away the hypocrisy of the statute whereby a person is not compelled to turn up to enrol; we are taking away the hypocrisy of that situation where a person is not compelled to turn up to enrol but they have to turn up and vote.

We are seeking to change that situation yet Opposition members claim that we are seeking to disenfranchise the electorate by removing the compulsion. What we are actually doing is enhancing what women fought for over 100 years ago, that is, the right to vote. It deals with the right of people to choose whether or not they exercise their right to vote. By removing the compulsion we are enhancing the education process of a democratic system where we look at issues and the politics of the situation and we consider the right to vote. That is what this Bill is all about. It is not about compelling people to get out there and it is not about disenfranchising people, but it is about giving people the right and freedom to choose which way they want to go.

Mr ATKINSON (Spence): For about half my life, since I studied constitutional law—

Mr BECKER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek a ruling from you: since when have objects such as footstools been permitted to be used as lecterns on the desks in this House? We have never been allowed to use them in the 24 years that I have been in this House and I am wondering what the position is now. Has there been a new ruling?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member has raised an issue which has been brought to my notice simply by my being in the Chair over the past few weeks and observing such usage since the new Parliament began. I took no specific personal objection to the use of the footstools as lecterns and I see no reason why I should rule against them being used at this stage, but the matter is under review. The member for Spence.

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. For about half my life, since I studied constitutional law, I have

been worried about the diminishing standing of the Australian States within the Federal bargain. Since High Court cases such as the Engineer's case, the Uniform Tax cases and the Franklin Dam case, the powers of the Australian States have been severely diminished compared with the Commonwealth's powers. It seems to me that to change State law so that voting for elections for the South Australian State Parliament becomes voluntary while voting for the Commonwealth Parliament is compulsory will lead to a great lowering of the status of the State Parliament.

Voluntary voting for this Parliament would put it on the same level as local government in South Australia. The point I make was anticipated by Mr Whittle, the member for Prospect, a Liberal Party member who spoke in the debate on compulsory voting in the House in 1942. Mr Whittle said:

I have previously stated that the feeling has grown up among certain sections of the public in South Australia that, because they are not compelled to vote at State elections, they can look upon the State Parliament as something of secondary importance. . . . When canvassers call upon people, the first question generally asked is, 'Do we have to vote?' and if told that they have not their interest seems to wane immediately. . . . At the last State election only about 50 per cent of the people recorded their votes.

The turnout in local government elections in South Australia is roughly 20 per cent across the State and lower in the metropolitan area. If voluntary voting were introduced for the State Parliament I believe that over a series of elections the turnout for South Australian State Parliament elections could fall as low as those local government figures. In this Parliament it is common for Liberal members to complain about the fiscal imbalance, about the fact that, while the State of South Australia spends a great deal of money, much of that is granted to it by the Commonwealth and that the State does not have sufficient taxing powers to raise the revenue that it needs. Members opposite say they want to remedy that but if this—

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am fascinated by the argument about fiscal imbalance, but I fail to see its relevance to a Bill which is basically concerned with non-compulsory voting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Unley for his point of order, and I am sure the member for Spence will return to the subject as quickly as possible.

Mr ATKINSON: The relevance of the point is that, although fiscal imbalance is one big blow to the standing of the Australian States, making voting for State Parliaments voluntary will be a blow of equal significance. Compulsory enrolment was introduced for the Federal Parliament in 1911. The State of Queensland was the first State to require compulsory voting by its citizens. Compulsory voting in that State was introduced by the Denham Liberal Government in a desperate attempt to avoid coming defeat at the polls at the hands of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Labor Party. In the event, the Australian Labor Party won the State election of June 1915 in Queensland, but compulsory voting was introduced by a Liberal Government.

Similarly, in the Federal sphere compulsory voting was legislated for in July 1924, when the Nationalist Government of Stanley Melbourne Bruce was in office. In the previous Federal election of 1922 the turnout had fallen as low as 59 per cent so members on both sides of the House (Nationalist and Labor) agreed to the introduction of compulsory voting.

In South Australia compulsory voting is part of the Playford heritage. When I visited the Royal Adelaide Show last year I went to the Liberal pavilion, as I always do, and

watched a video in which one of the voices was that of the current Premier. The video was about the Playford heritage. Compulsory voting was not mentioned, but I assure members that it was in August 1942, when Thomas Playford had been Premier for at least four years, that compulsory voting passed both Houses of Parliament with the support of the Liberal Party. Indeed, the initiative for compulsory voting came from the Liberal Party machine.

In that year, by a majority of more than two thirds, the Liberal and Country League State Council changed Liberal Party policy in favour of compulsory voting, and of course the parliamentary Liberal Party stood to attention and within months implemented that resolution. The first argument I would put against voluntary voting for State Parliament is that it will lead to a low turnout and thereby impugn the legitimacy of State Parliament. It is more democratic if 96 per cent of eligible voters vote than if only 50 per cent vote. A Government that is elected on a high turnout has more legitimacy than a Government elected on a low turnout.

Mr Brindal: Why? Come on, tell us why.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley has made his contribution once and should not make a second speech by way of interjection. Interjections are out of order.

Mr ATKINSON: To bolster my point, I should like to quote from Thomas Playford's Attorney-General (Hon. S.W. Jeffries), who was then the member for Torrens. In the House he said:

I cannot agree that people should not be compelled to do things which this Parliament considers are in the interests and welfare of the government of the country. It seems to me that there is a responsibility on every citizen to take part in the government and, if he does not do it voluntarily, pressure should be brought to bear to see that he does.

The Hon. S.W. Jeffries went on:

It is regrettable that electors should be compelled to vote, but it seems that it is absolutely necessary. At the last elections there were 5 962 electors on the roll in the Chaffey district, but only 2 778 voted. The present member for that district received only 1 723 votes.

In the Federal election before compulsory voting for the Federal Parliament the turnout was 59 per cent; in the South Australian election before compulsory voting for the State Parliament the turnout was 50.7 per cent.

A second reason for opposing the Bill is that I believe that voting is a civic duty and a responsibility that should be shared by all eligible citizens. I believe it is a discipline of citizenship, and I support the punishment in Italy for failing to vote when eligible, namely, placing the names of non-voters on the public record and excluding them from eligibility for employment in the public service.

I think that compulsory voting is like compulsory education, vaccination, military training for home service, jury service and paying rates. Members who have to deal, as we all must, with vexatious constituents and people who are always complaining about politicians and criticising parliamentary democracy and our political system, will be aware that it is just those people who do the complaining who, under a system of voluntary voting, will not vote. Experienced members of this House will agree with me when I say that, if we have a system of voluntary voting, and constituents front up whom we know do not vote, they will not get equal service from members of Parliament.

Ross Parish, writing in the *Australian* of 11 June 1992 puts it rather well when he says:

Democratic politics is a nasty business, and political debate is characterised by hypocrisy, humbug and deceit. The game is not attractive to persons of moral and aesthetic sensibility, and should be constrained as much as possible by constitutional limitations. But even in a minimal state, political activity is a regrettable necessity. As with jury service and military service, there are arguments against leaving politics to professionals and volunteers.

He goes on:

The ill effects of voluntary voting are evident in the election for office in voluntary organisations and trade unions, where well-organised, cohesive minorities often win control.

Never a truer word was written, I might interpose. He goes on:

By insisting that all citizens, including the apathetic and the apolitical, perform their civic duty of voting, compulsory voting affects political culture in a conservative way and helps preserve us from the depredations of ideologues and powerful pressure groups. . . 'compulsory voting probably increases the difficulty of amending the Constitution or carrying other referendums'—to me, a clinching argument in its favour.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: The member for Unley interjects in this important debate. The member for Unley is living proof that a pig's bladder on a stick can be elected to Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would suggest that the honourable member has had a better opportunity than most people in this House in relation to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. I do not think that that comment is parliamentary or does anything to enhance the level of debate in Parliament or the standing of this Parliament in the eyes of the community, which is very important. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment and to proceed in a rational manner.

Mr ATKINSON: I withdraw, Sir. I believe the third point against voluntary voting is the cost. The main motivation of both the Federal Labor Party and the Nationalist Party in 1924 was the enormous cost of ferrying people to the polling booths in the motor vehicles of the day. In the United States of America millions upon millions of dollars are spent not just on convincing people to turn out and vote but on convincing supporters of the other candidate not to vote.

Voluntary voting makes the political Parties rely on local machines and motivates them to boost their membership. That is the strongest argument of all for voluntary voting; namely, to revitalise the Party machines. However, there is no doubt that there will be an enormous cost in turning out people to the polling booths if voluntary voting is introduced. Figures published by Professor Colin Hughes show that the average cost of elections in Australia is far below the cost in comparable western industrial democracies. I, for one, would like the cost of Australian elections to stay low, but it will increase enormously if we introduce voluntary voting.

It is not that I am afraid of voluntary voting. As other members know, the Australian Labor Party's Spence sub-branch runs a most successful local government machine and many of our members and friends are members of the City of Hindmarsh and Woodville council and the City of Enfield council. So, the Spence ALP sub-branch, for one, is well adapted to voluntary voting and to turning out voters. Although we would be prepared for voluntary voting, it is not in the interests of the State as a whole.

I should note that in the last Parliament the Liberal Party opposed and, indeed, voted to prohibit, the practice of taking voters to local government polling booths in vehicles. I notice that this Bill does not deny the State Liberal Party the right

to take State electors to State polling booths, so there is an inconsistency there.

My father came from the Republic of Ireland and he spoke to me about voluntary voting in that country. I should preface these remarks by saying that my family in Ireland, although they voted for the Irish Labour Party and the Fine Gael Party, never voted for Fianna Fail. Fianna Fail, which translates into English as the Soldiers of Ireland Party, was renowned for putting on free whiskey and free Guinness at halls around Ireland when a general election was on. Speeches would be made, the troops would be rounded up and wound up and then, at the call of the master of ceremonies, they would go off to vote as one. That is all very colourful and lovable, but I do not want to see it in South Australia.

As many speakers have pointed out, the evidentiary requirement to prove disobedience of the compulsory voting law means that it is open to electors to attend a polling booth, have their name crossed off and either pocket or spoil their ballot paper. So, in effect, we do not have genuine compulsory voting now. In the Woodville South polling booth at the 11 December poll, the count went on late into the evening—after 10 p.m.—because ballot papers were missing; that is, the number of ballot papers in the boxes did not equal the number of ballot papers issued. The explanation is quite simple: some electors in the region of Woodville South decided to put their ballot paper into their pocket and take it home or throw it into the rubbish bin. That is their right and I do not disagree with it.

The Liberal Party has also tried to argue that some people who vote under the compulsory voting requirement are ignorant and should, therefore, not be encouraged to vote and that compulsory voting contributes to a higher informal vote. However, studies by Professor Colin Hughes show that, once compulsory voting was introduced, informal voting increased only slightly, and in House of Representatives elections the increase was about .2 per cent.

My final point is that voluntary voting will lead to a differential turnout rate. When voting in Australia was voluntary, the rate of turnout of women was 10 percentage points below that of men. Under voluntary voting, political Parties will ignore those constituents and groups of constituents who are known not to vote or who have a low turnout rate, and the names of voters and non-voters will be entered on the political Party's data base.

I believe we should have a referendum on this question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Ridley.

Mr LEWIS (Ridley): A couple of grubby, mongrel arguments that I—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ridley will resume his seat. Unfortunately, over the past two or three days a trend has been developing in the House whereby members make comments that are not in the best interests of this House. The Chair will come down very hard on anyone who starts making unparliamentary remarks or reflects on another member. I will have no hesitation, regardless of what section of the House it comes from, in dealing with it. The member for Ridley.

Mr LEWIS: Then may I use a mathematical rather than a biological analogy? I am not talking about any member, Mr Speaker, let me reassure you: I was talking about the substance of the argument I have heard here this afternoon. In no way did I impute to any individual member the incapacity to argue more effectively than they have.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: Well deserved, maybe; some good batsmen go for a duck. I think the Leader of the Opposition would do well to remember that. It was quite specious of him to put the proposition that it is inappropriate to be conscripted to serve in the armed forces yet quite appropriate to be conscripted to vote. That is the substance of the grounds on which he establishes his entire case. There is a contradiction, and that is regrettable.

Moreover, the member for Spence said something which I would never have expected any member of the Labor Party in this or the other Chamber in this State to admit, and that is that, whereas before members of the Labor Party have always said that they are not involved in partisan politics in local government, the member for Spence admitted and acknowledged that for some time now in the City of Hindmarsh the Labor Party has been very well organised in local government. I suspected that such was the case in Tea Tree Gully as long ago as 25 years. I became convinced that I had incontrovertible evidence that that was so 20 years ago.

I refer to other instances where the Labor Party has caucused to determine whom its candidates will be in a number of local government areas around the metropolitan area of Adelaide. It has then gone public and said, 'No, it is not a Party decision. It is just that we happen to be members of the Party and that we got together to decide whom we would support in each of the wards. We are not doing it as members of the Labor Party.' The member for Spence—and I cannot say he has laid the lie to that—has certainly convinced us beyond any shadow of doubt that the Labor Party does endorse candidates, has been doing so for some time and is already organised to do so in Spence on the basis that there will be voluntary voting in State Parliament in the near future.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: I am pleased with the frankness of the member for Spence. I have known him for a long time to be a man of considerable integrity in the expression of factual information or otherwise. I have never known him to mislead me, and that is more than I can say for the Deputy Leader. Notwithstanding either of those arguments, what I implore all members to do is simply to think about an ideal society, regardless of their political allegiance. I want them to think about that in the context of the technologies we now have at our disposal. Those technologies enable us to do what it was impossible to do 20 years ago.

I have been convinced of the validity of our case, namely, that there should be voluntary voting—the right to decide not to attend the poll or to ignore the fact that a poll is on and not to participate—as much as the right to participate when there is a poll. I have been convinced of that in recent times, because it is now technologically possible to prove whether or not the voter claiming to be the name on the roll is that person. In a very short time, we will be able to do that without having to resort to an identity card carrying a photograph. We will be able to do it by other means—by using bar codes. This ensures for me that the abuse which has occurred in recent history in some democracies where voting has been voluntary, of people voting in the names of others after voting in their own name, will not and cannot occur. Therefore, it can be avoided in the determination of the result of an election.

Mr Speaker, you and I know that in country communities almost everybody is known to the poll clerks in the town—their place, where they live, what they do, what their interests are and so on. In urban settings, however, it is not possible

to know everybody in the same way as in the country. If you are fanatical enough, there has always been a temptation to vote in one location and, risking detection—the chance of which is slight and remote—to go to another location to vote absent, or to go to another part of the electorate where you are unlikely to be recognised and vote again and again and again.

It reminds me of a Democrats slogan I heard during a Federal election in the United States: 'Vote early and vote often.' That is an abuse which we can easily avoid. The technology is there to prevent it. Computers will be able to read the thumb and fingerprints by simply placing them on a heat sensitive pad. That will be linked to our identity to determine that we are whom we claim to be.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: No, you do not have to. The computer will do it for you. The genetic expression in the form of the fingerprint can be accurately read. It is the same sort of technology that we have for the determination of the location on the surface of the earth using satellites.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: You do not have to: they offer to have themselves fingerprinted. Notwithstanding that, the fact remains that we will not have the abuses in future which have been possible until now. There is not the risk of duplication of the vote. In addition to that, anyone who does not care enough and who does not want to participate need not. To my mind, that is what determines the quality of the outcome. That is the will of the people.

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

Mr LEWIS: Before the dinner adjournment I went to some pains to ensure that the House understood the technologies available to us to ensure that there was no risk of abuse to the voting system by going from compulsory to voluntary attendance at the poll. It is now possible to establish beyond doubt that there is no likelihood of people being able to get away with the practice of voting more than once in the names of others as well as themselves. Given that that is the case, we need to consider the individual's desire to participate in the process and the benefits that are derived from doing so.

In my judgment, it is fairer, better and more democratic to allow any individual to decide whether or not to be part of the process, election to election. If for any reason they do not feel that they can make a decision that means anything to themselves and is likely to contribute to the enhancement of the polity and life of their fellow humans, it ought to be their right not to participate. By forcing them to participate—going to the poll to have their name struck off—many may believe it is necessary to cast the formal vote one way or the other. Even though that is not the case in law, I know it is a belief held at large that the ballot-paper must be marked. I share the view expressed by the member for Spence that there is no necessity whatever for the ballot-paper to be marked or, for that matter, to be put into the ballot-box. For us to make any such law is an abrogation of the right and the responsibility that citizens have to participate in the process and express an opinion as to whom they would choose to represent them.

If I were to believe Opposition members in their strenuous support for the retention of the compulsory ballot, as it is called, I would have to see some evidence of it within their own organisation and the structures which throw up such people to become part of the Parliament in consequence of the involvement that they have had in those social structures. Even though there is only one Opposition member present in

the Chamber, namely, the member for Hart, I trust that the remaining eight, I think it is now, will take the trouble to consider what I have to say on this point.

Nowhere in their organisation is it compulsory for members to vote on any issue on which they are entitled to vote; it is entirely voluntary. That is the first point. If they believed what they were saying here tonight, it would be compulsory, if one were a member of the ALP, to go to sub-branch meetings and vote. That is a consistent position, is it not?

Mr Foley: No.

Mr LEWIS: Then the member for Hart would have me believe that in his organisation it is all right to participate voluntarily in deciding policy, the organisation of branch affairs and who does and does not get endorsed. Apparently there is no necessity to require members to participate in that organisation's decision making process. Yet the same member can come in here and argue that it is necessary for everybody to vote for the benefit of society.

The honourable member knows very well that the belief at large is that attendance at the poll is a requirement to mark the ballot-paper. I would rather have people who had the passion and/or insight and who were willing to make the commitment go to the poll and state their belief by marking the ballot-paper in the way in which they were motivated by their convictions and leave everyone else who feels so indifferent about it, either continuously or on that occasion, to make their decision by not attending and being free without pangs of conscience and fear of retribution to do that. That is the kind of ideal that I see in society at large, for then a few things emerge as important to those of us who seek to be the practitioners of policy—those of us who seek to be elected to this place and to determine what shall be the composition of our laws and the direction our society takes.

It then becomes part of the burden of our responsibility, as people elected to this place from amongst the group who sought to be elected, to inspire the rest, to explain to the rest and to get a commitment from the rest of our fellow human beings to participate and to go and vote, to believe that it will be an important action on their part to have a say as individuals, equal to every other individual in that process. If they do not feel that way, it should be their right to have no pangs of conscience not to participate. Then, those of us who have the ability to explain the issues and the reason why we are committed to a particular course of action based on that explanation—

Mr Foley: And have the money.

Mr LEWIS: There's no money involved at all, I would tell the member for Hart. It is not a question of bribery. I know the way he must operate, if that's the kind of interjection he makes, and that is sad. It is not a question of wealth. In this society, everyone, regardless of their means, certainly in urban settings, can get wherever they need or want to go. There is very little risk of their suffering injury or losing life in the process—even of walking. If you feel passionate enough about anything, including life itself, you will walk a long way to stay alive, and I can speak from experience. You will walk with a great deal of adversity confronting you compared with what you would normally expect to confront you. You will do it because you will believe that it is worth doing. That is what it ought to be about.

If you do not believe in anything, and if you cannot see anything important enough to vote about, one way or the other, then you ought not be compelled to do so. That is what this legislation is about: compulsion or not. If you do not

believe in conscription, as many members opposite have indicated, when it comes to serving your country in other ways, then it is consistent, rational and reasonable to leave the decision about whether to vote to the individual rather than compel them to go to the poll. I believe that we will have a better polity and democracy as a consequence of having the right to choose whether we will vote, rather than being compelled, in the belief that we must go and, on arrival, whether or not in law, believe that we must mark the ballot-paper.

For I fear that the process as we have it does not leave enough responsibility on those of us who seek to be part of this institution to encourage the rest of our fellow humans to either support or oppose us for what we stand for and what we would do in the name of democracy, in the name of justice, and in the name of the common welfare of all citizens. So much so that I have now changed my mind from where it was 20 years ago and I quite happily and strenuously argue in favour of the legislation we have before us. I trust that the unrepresentative people we have who could not win a place in this Chamber—some of them now in the other Chamber—do not interfere in that process, as they say they will, because it is a quirk of fate that they happen to be back there. I mean no disrespect to the member for Playford. I do not see him as a quirk of fate—his parents might have but I do not.

I see it as very important that the members of the other place do not frustrate the will of the electorate, since the people gave yourself, Sir, myself, and our colleagues such a huge mandate for this and other policies that were spelt out so well and so often prior to the last election that it should not be necessary for us again to have to argue those policies as being policies for which we have a mandate.

Mr FOLEY (Hart): Whilst I may not agree with many of the comments made by the member for Ridley, I acknowledge the sincerity with which he spoke and gave his contribution tonight.

Mr Atkinson: A fine member.

Mr FOLEY: A very fine member. It is funny that we should be in this House tonight debating whether we should or should not have compulsory voting. Indeed, it was a Liberal Government that first introduced compulsory voting into this country: the Denham Liberal Government in Queensland in 1915. Over the next 28 years the other States and the Commonwealth followed suit. We had the Commonwealth declaring compulsory voting in 1924; Victoria in 1926; New South Wales and Tasmania both in 1928; Western Australia in 1936; and, of course, South Australia in 1942.

Mr Speaker, at the last Commonwealth election before we had compulsory voting, there was only a 59 per cent voter turnout. Since compulsion has been introduced into the voting system we have seen a turnout in excess of 90 per cent. One of the many arguments put forward by our Liberal opponents is that Australia is one of the few countries in the world that has compulsory voting and, like many of the arguments put forward by the Liberal Party, that is clearly wrong.

In 1990, the following countries had compulsory voting, although not necessarily compulsory enrolment. Let us go through the list, because if you believe members opposite you would think that we are one of two or three countries that has compulsory voting. The list is as follows: Argentina; of course, Australia; Belgium; Brazil; Cyprus; the Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; France, for their Senate; Greece; Guatemala; Indonesia; Italy; Korea; Lebanon; Liechtenstein;

Luxembourg; Mexico; Nauru; Papua New Guinea; Peru; Portugal; Singapore; Spain; Turkey; Venezuela; Zaire; and Zambia. There are some great nations amongst those countries.

An honourable member: Especially Zaire.

Mr FOLEY: Particularly Zaire. Voluntary voting throughout the world has clearly been a failure. Indeed, in South Australia we only have to look at local government elections. I am sure many members opposite have intimate knowledge of what happens with local governments in their electorates. Certainly I know that in relation to my electorate of Hart with the Port Adelaide council. Across the State—and this is a very disturbing figure—there was a voter turnout at the last council election of 19.7 per cent.

So, here we have the third tier of Government—in some ways an extremely important tier of Government that delivers many important services at community level—with voluntary voting, yet only 19.7 per cent of electors feel that they should vote. Some opposite would say that that is their democratic right and, if only 19.7 per cent of people want to vote, only 19.7 per cent need to vote. But it is not as simple as that. In this House we are all politicians, and we know how the game of politics is played. Unfortunately, at local council level, with voluntary voting it is very easy for small interest groups or for individuals themselves to get elected to council, some with very good intentions. But, unfortunately, there are those who get elected to local council that do not necessarily have the council's good intention in mind. What you have is the ability to manipulate elections, and I mentioned before, when the member for Ridley was speaking, the issue of money—

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Well before my time, Minister. You have the issue of money. If you have some spare resources to spend in a council election, in most cases you are half way home. Clearly, the quality of local councils is something that concerns me greatly. I am not casting aspersions necessarily on my own local council in Port Adelaide, but there are some councils in Adelaide where you would have to say, given the budgets they have to administer (some in the order of \$40 million or \$50 million), that it is simply not good enough to have a group of individuals on those councils who are clearly not the best people to have been elected.

If you ever want to argue to me, at least, the case of voluntary against compulsory voting, I always throw back local government. I am sorry the member for Colton is not here with me tonight. I am not sure whether he would necessarily agree with my comments, but it is an important point.

Mr Quirke: He was an example of it.

Mr FOLEY: I do not want to cast any comment on our fellow members. Another example is the Netherlands. Up until the last election in the Netherlands in 1967, compulsory voting was the norm. When they changed to voluntary voting the rate dropped immediately from 94.7 per cent voter turnout to 79 per cent. That was the first election after compulsory voting came in. So, immediately about 20 per cent of voters simply withdrew from the system.

Many speakers tonight from our side have cited America and Great Britain, and I would like to do the same. In the 1992 presidential elections in the United States, voter turnout was 55.9 per cent. Bill Clinton was effectively elected President by 25.9 per cent of the population who were eligible to vote. I am actually quite pleased that Bill Clinton was elected, but the point is that 26 per cent of the population, essentially, decided who would be, arguably, the most

powerful political leader in this world. I think there is something wrong with that, whilst not complaining about the outcome. Whilst the United Kingdom had a better voter turnout at the last elections in 1992, 75.8 per cent, the Conservative Party (the Tories) won, with 42.8 per cent of all votes cast. Therefore, John Major, the British Prime Minister, was elected by 32.4 per cent of those who were entitled to vote.

Members interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Sure, but the statistics are there: 32.4 per cent of the population, essentially, elected a British Prime Minister. I think that is wrong and does not serve democracy well at all. I only wish that the new Liberal Government in this State had some courage to come clean and say why it really wants voluntary voting. We have heard some speakers tonight and, no doubt, will hear more as the night goes on.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: Exactly, and it is important that we clarify the actual intentions. Again, we are all politicians, and I think we are all fine politicians. The Liberal Party has not come clean about why it wants voluntary voting. We are all political operators in this Parliament. Government members should be honest and say why they want this measure: they want it because it is a naked grab for power. They have power in the State now—and I acknowledge the significant win that the Liberal Party had at the last State election—but they want to entrench themselves as the Government in this State. They know, and I know, and every political commentator worth their salt knows, that voluntary voting will certainly enhance the prospects of an incumbent Government, but more importantly will enhance the position of conservative Governments.

I just wish that the Government would have the decency to come clean: be honest about it. Members opposite should not come in here and tell us they have some great view about voluntary voting, that it is all about individual rights, that it is some great facet of liberalism they are espousing. They know that is not the truth. The truth is they want to entrench themselves for the next X number of years in Government.

The Hon. H. Allison: But you've already done that!

Mr FOLEY: I know, and they know, that that is the truth, and certainly the member for Gordon, whom I respect enormously as a long-serving member in this Chamber, will at least have the decency to come clean in his contribution to this debate. I am sure he will, the honest man that the member for Gordon is.

Mr Quirke: Honest but not stupid.

Mr FOLEY: Honest but not stupid, correct; so I suspect it is a bit much to expect that the honourable member will come clean. I finish that point with the hope that members opposite would show some courage and come clean. But we know this is not a courageous Government. It has a mandate, and it will have a honeymoon—I accept that, and we will work our way through that—but it has been very evident since this Government has been elected that it does hide behind committees, reviews, consultants and whatever other mechanism it can find to avoid having to make a decision.

I would now like to quote from a certain individual who I am sure is well known to many members opposite, a very vocal participator in the debate on compulsory versus non-compulsory voting throughout the country. Whilst this particular person is from an opposite political Party to me, he is a person whose views should be acknowledged and appreciated. Of course, I talk about a very senior Liberal member in New South Wales, a former Liberal Senator who

unfortunately was the victim of some internal Liberal Party politics that saw him lose his position.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: He got rolled by Bronwyn.

Mr FOLEY: By Bronwyn, exactly.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The first victim.

Mr FOLEY: Exactly, the first victim.

Mr Quirke: The first scalp.

Mr FOLEY: The first scalp to the ex-Senator, the next Leader of the Federal Liberal Party, Mrs Bishop. I am talking about former Senator Chris Puplick who, as we know, is a senior member of the New South Wales Liberal Party; indeed, he is a senior member of the moderate side of the Liberal Party in New South Wales, commonly and very affectionately known as the wets. We have a number of wets on the other side of the House. I find it a bit amusing that we are actually debating this issue.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

Mr FOLEY: He was. How such people as the member for Coles, the member for Bragg who is in the Chamber now, and the Premier are supporting this Bill is beyond me, because many wets have spoken privately to me and are opposed to it. Let us look at what ex-Senator Chris Puplick had to say. With the indulgence of the House, I will quote a few paragraphs from an article printed in the *Australian* in 1991. He stated:

It seems to me a pity that the Coalition Parties are now set upon a course of making our political system even more idiotic than it is at the moment with their proposals to abolish compulsory voting. Compulsory voting has one overwhelming argument in support of it; one deliberately ignored by Coalition commentators: compulsory voting is the best way to diminish the political influence of rich and powerful special interests. It diminishes the power of money and hence the possibility of corruption in our political system.

That statement is from a senior New South Wales member of the Liberal Party. In the same article he goes on to say:

In Australia, because voters must go to the polling booths, the pressure to spend large sums of money to get them to do this does not exist.

He further states:

Of course, while we say that there is compulsory voting, it should be made clear that all that is actually compulsory is the requirement to attend the polling booth. Once there and once issued with a ballot paper, you do not have to cast a valid vote. If you really object to this compulsion you are free to cast an informal vote in protest.

So, let us get the record straight: we are not debating compulsory voting, as there is no compulsory voting in this State: you simply must have your name marked off the register. Senator Puplick goes on to say:

The other charge which compulsory voting brings to the political system is related: it also reduces the impact of well financed pressure groups. Pressure groups succeed in corrupting the political process only when they are able to exercise pressure which is out of proportion to their actual numbers, strength or level of support in the community. This generally is a factor related to their access to money.

The member for Ridley mocked me when I mentioned the issue of money, but here we have one of his own colleagues in the Liberal Party telling all Australians in this article that voluntary voting leads to huge amounts of money being spent. I hope Liberal members throughout the House listen to the following quotation. Senator Puplick finishes his article by saying:

As a Liberal I always need to be convinced of any case which involves a degree of compulsion, but in this instance I think the arguments are clear and overwhelming. It is generally accepted that the abolition of compulsory voting would benefit the Coalition and,

as a Liberal Party member for more than 25 years, I desperately want to see the Coalition win the next election—

Incidentally, this article was published in 1991, so the Liberal Party still had another election to lose.

Mr Quirke: It has a few more yet.

Mr FOLEY: That is true, although Bronwyn is coming. The article continues:

... but they must do it without weakening the fundamental basis of a democratic system: the reduction in the power of special interests through compulsory voting. By underpinning and reinforcing responsibility for political decision making we strengthen our system, for when Lincoln spoke of government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people' he meant all of them. To abolish a system which has preserved the integrity of Australian politics far above that common in voluntary systems such as that of the U.S. would really be, in every sense, the triumph of the idiots—

'the triumph of the idiots'. All members opposite should refer to the *Australian* of February 1991 and read what their own senior Federal Liberal Party member is telling them. He has a very well argued and well reasoned case against the abolition of compulsory voting, and that is because—and perhaps this comes when you are an ex-Senator—he has a degree of honesty. He is making clear for all Australians to see that the abolition of compulsory voting helps the conservative Parties of this country, because they have the access to the money; they have the access to that class of people that are more than willing to vote without the encumbrance of compulsion. It is unfortunate that there are those in our community who, for a variety of reasons, would not vote if the system was voluntary. I do not think that it serves the democratic process of this country any good to have what would be a pseudo gerrymander system where one Party was highly advantaged at the expense of the other.

I hope that, in the remaining contributions to the House tonight and for that matter when we next debate this issue if it should go beyond tonight, some members of the Liberal Party have the decency and the honesty to state the truth: that it is all about politics; it is all about entrenching the power of the Liberal Party and maximising its political advantage.

It is all about putting yourself into a position where you can write the cheques, bring the people out to vote and in so doing depriving many Australians, and in this case many South Australians, of the opportunity to determine who should govern this State. As I said, it is accepted that the Government has a mandate, a large majority and four years with which to do something with that majority. As evidenced in this Bill, the Government is not being truthful or honest to South Australians. Since coming into government, many of the Government's decisions have not been open and I only wish that the Government had the political courage to make decisions and be willing to make risky decisions for what it considers to be the right way to go for South Australia.

The Government does not do that. It sets up committees, reviews and inquiries. It has introduced a Bill into this House abolishing compulsory voting because of some arguments that the rights of the individual are more important than compulsion. However, at the same time the Minister for Industrial Affairs and others are raising issues such as the compulsory testing of motor vehicles. The Government wants to have its cake and to eat it too. On the one hand, where it politically helps the Government it wants to get rid of something while, on the other hand, when it wants to bring in provisions for the compulsory testing of motor vehicles it does that. Do you have compulsion or not?

Mr Meier: You're wrong.

Mr FOLEY: I beg to differ with the member for Goyder: it is not wrong.

Mr Meier: I said that you are wrong.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member's Government wants to introduce compulsory testing but it does not have the guts to do so. It sets up a select committee. The Government always sets up a select committee to make the hard decisions. If it is a hard decision, set up a committee—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The member for Elder.

Mr WADE (Elder): I speak in support of the Bill. We are debating repealing Division VI, Part IX of the Electoral Act 1985. Headed 'Compulsory Voting', section 85(1) provides: . . . it is the duty of every elector to record his vote at each election in a district for which he is enrolled.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

Mr WADE: I am quoting the Act: the legal 'He'. A blank voting form is acceptable. Therefore, in reality a person who is enrolled must attend an appropriate place to have his or her name crossed off the electoral roll and be given a voting slip. People are not required to fill in the slip: they are required only to show up and have their name crossed off the roll. Why would people bother to show up and vote? First, it could be because they wish to be actively involved in the democratic process. Secondly, they may believe—and they would be accurate in that belief—that they have a legal requirement to obey the law that provides that it is their duty to record their vote. Thirdly, it could be because they are under threat of a \$50 fine if they do not show up and have their name crossed off the electoral roll. We believe that it is the first case. We believe that people want to have their say and are aware of their responsibilities to maintain our democratic processes. We believe that the South Australian people, indeed the Australian people, can be trusted to fulfil their obligations to society through the democratic process of voting without having to have a legal requirement.

We believe the South Australian people are not little children who require their Government to wave a big compelling stick over them—a stick worth \$50. We do not believe that the fate of our democracy and the fate of our democratic process hangs in the balance of the payment or the non-payment of a \$50 fine. Nor does it hang on a piece of legislation that drags people to the polls to have their names crossed off the electoral roll. It is the democratic right of citizens living within a democracy to decide whether or not they wish to cast a vote. It is their right to choose, and that is a democratic process. Any democratically elected Government must not have the power to interfere with a citizen's right of free choice. Division VI of Part IX of the Electoral Act 1985 is an affront to democracy and an insult to the intelligence and integrity of all South Australians.

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, those on the other side and the undemocratic Democrats feel it necessary to retain a piece of legislation that requires people to attend a polling booth or a pre-poll facility or record an absentee vote. Perhaps they truly believe these responsibilities should be enshrined in legislation, just in case we forget our democratic responsibilities.

They obviously believe that a fine of \$50 for not obeying section 85 is holding our democracy together. That is about the cost of one high quality bow tie that the member for Spence could buy and wear. Are those on the other side telling us that we are living in some kind of 'Dicky Bow Tie' democracy, that our very existence depends upon a \$50 note?

Even I do not seriously entertain the thought that those on the other side actually believe our democracy is worth \$50.

In fact, we need to put this question into perspective, and I will give an analogy—our education system. A few years back we moved away from examinations into a form of assessment called continuous assessment. Why did we do this? We did it because for a period of from four to six weeks or two months people crammed information into their heads and sat for an exam in order to appease an examiner, pass that exam and therefore gain some qualification. Normally that information left their heads straightaway afterwards. It would seem to be a very poor method of assessment. So, we introduced continuous assessment where over a period of time a person is assessed. They are given information in digestible bites. At the end of that period the people have information so they can make decisions regarding their life in a far more mature and knowledgeable way compared to a four week cramming period for examinations.

That is how the process of democracy should be. The electorate should not be completely ignored for nearly four years, and then in the last four weeks (and last time it was six weeks) be subjected to a barrage of information that is designed to swing them from one side to another or perhaps to ensure that those who previously voted for one Party will continue to vote for that Party. What we are looking at is to move away from that type of system, to make politicians more accountable to their electorates and to the people of South Australia. When politicians are assessed continuously, when an election is called after that four year period, people will make their judgments based on four years of continuous assessment, not four weeks of advertising crammed into their heads.

If we can move that way successfully in education, we can move that way in our democratic system of voting. In fact, it should always be remembered that, if the other side and the undemocratic Democrats insist on maintaining this undemocratic but legal requirement to have one's name crossed off the electoral roll, it is the responsibility of this Government to remove the threat of a fine. If a person chooses to exercise their democratic right not to follow the procedures of section 85, this Government will do all in its power not to interfere with that right and not to penalise a citizen's choice.

Ms HURLEY (Napier): While I have not detected a groundswell of support for voluntary voting, I have detected an increasing demand for more say in the democratic process. The Government should be looking at ways of including people in a more effective way rather than excluding them through voluntary voting because, when the rhetoric of choice is stripped away from the Government's argument, the system becomes one in which those who are unfamiliar with the system are effectively discouraged from voting. The people who will thus be discouraged include young people, newly arrived migrants and marginalised people who are very wary of officialdom of any sort. That trend is clear from an analysis of voting in the United States of America. In that country it has been found that only one in four low income citizens vote; in other words, only one in four of the poorer and dispossessed people of the United States is willing to participate in the voting process.

It appears that this Government would wish to have a similar situation exist in the State of South Australia. It would rather not go before all the people for a decision on its performance as a Government; it would be voted on by a population which has a decreased proportion of low income

and marginalised people. To me that indicates where this Government will be directing its policies. Its policies will also exclude consideration of low income and marginalised people because, if we introduce voluntary voting, the Government will be able to afford to ignore those people who do not vote. The overwhelming evidence is that the people who do not vote are the low income people—the people who need most help from the Government.

These people reach the situation where they are increasingly alienated from any interest in Government and bureaucracy, and this Government is willing to allow that to happen. I feel particularly strongly about this because I think it includes some groups within my electorate. I know those people may not be able to articulate their political philosophy and they may not be able to effectively lobby Government—whether it be local, State or Federal—but they are the people who have particularly strong needs and who need effective representation. To say to those people that their vote does not count or does not matter—that they should not be interested in the process—is wrong in terms of the democracy to which we aspire. I believe that we should not be saying to those people that they are second-class citizens and that their vote does not count as much as that of people who are more educated.

I find it quite surprising that this Government has taken this tack. It has been given a tremendous vote by the people and it surprises me that it is not willing to go back to that same body of people at the end of its term and ask for their view on how it has performed in Government. It seems to me that this Government is running scared that its marginal seats may be vulnerable next time. It is trying to skew the system in favour—

Members interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: But this Government has a plan to skew the system in favour of itself; to weight the system in favour of the people who are most likely to vote for it.

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: I believe that I have the organisational ability to get people out to vote for me and that the voluntary voting system in fact would not work for the Government. However, I object to what I believe are the motives behind the move. I also find it interesting that, when we are discussing the countries that do and do not have voluntary voting, those major democracies that are often cited as having voluntary voting, such as Britain and the United States, also have a first-past-the-post system. That system discriminates against minor Parties and smaller groups.

I think that our representational system—which allows preferential voting—gives people a fairer and more democratic choice. If they have enough support, it allows minor Parties to be elected. I think that the way in which many Liberal supporters have talked about the Democrats indicates that they would rather this did not happen. They seem to believe that they have been given an automatic mandate to go in there and rule *ad infinitum*. They would rather have the system gerrymandered so that no-one else can get in.

I think that our system—the system that rules across all States in Australia and in the Federal arena—where we have compulsory voting with a preferential system, leads to a more representative, fairer and democratic Government. As a woman in this Parliament, aware of the long struggle that women had to achieve the vote, and in this year which celebrates the centenary of that achievement, I find it almost offensive that there is a proposal to take away that duty of a

citizen to vote. Women struggled so hard to achieve that recognition as a citizen—that ability to be able to vote. I find it strange that in this year, in particular, there should be an attempt to remove that duty as a citizen from not only women but from people generally.

We must not weaken our democratic base in this State; we must not separate ourselves from the other States and the Commonwealth; we must struggle to include people in our system—not exclude and alienate them. One of the major trends in our democracy has been a strong push towards citizens initiated referenda.

I think the public is moving towards having a greater say in Government, not a lesser say. They do not want to opt out of the system, to choose not to vote: they are seeking ways to be included in the process. This is something on which this Government should be spending its time rather than looking at ways to change the system perhaps to its own advantage. This system of a continuous stable democracy has worked in this State and in this country for a long time.

Mrs Rosenberg interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: A republic can easily be a democracy. A change to a republic does not make a totalitarian regime. In fact, one might well argue that a monarchy is less democratic than a republic. I do not see how the argument for a republic changes that at all. I think that Australia's stable democratic system has served this country very well and that to tamper with it, to create a class of citizens who regularly do not vote or who do not feel included in the political process, will extend the system so that the unemployed and poor people feel increasingly alienated from society.

Speaking as a representative of an area in which a number of people, particularly young people, feel alienated from the political and social processes, I believe this is an extremely bad signal to those people. The young people in our society are the ones who will not bother to put their name on the electoral roll or to vote, and they will be permanently isolated from our political process. They will not bother to educate themselves if there is no compulsion to vote. I am keen to include as many people as possible in our democracy, not to alienate them.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am pleased to support this Bill. I am unimpressed with the arguments put forward tonight by the other side. I know that the Labor Party is opposed to voluntary voting, and I expected to hear some salient points, but they have been so artificial they do not hold weight. In fact, it has been easy to see great flaws in the arguments of speaker after speaker. I am surprised that they oppose voluntary voting. Before I came into this establishment, I must admit that I was of the view that it was better to have compulsory voting. One of my key reasons for this opinion was that I believed that Australia's population was very small and that therefore it was important for all people to have their say, unlike countries such as America or Britain. However, my mind started to change when I was door knocking, even before I became a member of Parliament. At that stage, of course, I was not a member of Parliament: I was a candidate.

I remember knocking on a person's door and introducing myself as the Liberal candidate for Goyder. That person went right off at me and said, 'You're one of them, are you? I don't want to know you. You're all the same—just greedy, looking after your own ends. You have one thing in mind and that is to look after yourself. I don't want to know you.' I said, 'Hang on, I'm not a member of Parliament. I am a deputy principal, but I am standing for the Liberal Party. I am

seeking to change many of the things that you perceive about members of Parliament.' He said, 'No, you're one of them. You're all the same. I don't want to know you.' Bang! I thought, 'That person will be made to vote or made to go to the polling booth. If he does not go, he will get a fine'—which today is some \$50. I thought it was crazy that that person should be made to turn up at the polling booth. Since then, over time, I have struck many other examples, some of them quite amusing.

On one occasion I was speaking to a fellow and I asked, 'Is your wife here?' He said, 'Yes, she is over there.' I told that lady that I was calling on behalf of the Liberal candidate for that area. She said, 'I have made up my mind. I like Mr So and So. He has such nice hair.' I said, 'I think there is more to politics than the way people do their hair.' She said, 'No, I like his hairstyle and I am happy to vote for him.' I thought, 'That is how people are voting MPs in.' That will not change with voluntary voting, but what will change is that a lot of those people will not take the trouble to vote, because they will know they will not have to turn up. Therefore, people will have to do more than have nice hair. And all those who have receding hairlines will not have to worry quite so much—not that that should be a worry. I could cite many other examples along that line which have disturbed me.

Another thing I have considered is the transition in life when a person goes from primary school to high school to university. Not everyone goes to university: many go straight into the work force. I have seen in my own family that those in secondary school, if they want to get through matriculation, are literally driven by teachers for two years. They are made to submit their assignments on time, they are given material, and they are hand fed and spoon fed. If anyone at the school wants to get on, they have to push the students, and that school will probably get good results. I was delighted with the matriculation results of my first child who went through.

When students go to university, it is entirely different. There is no compulsion. You do not have to turn up for lectures. You do not have to attend tutorials. You do not even have to hand in your essays. You do not have to do anything. You do have to enrol if you want to be part of that university. It is up to you. A lot of students sink because they cannot adapt to it. I must admit the argument could be that the universities should make the students work. They should be like secondary schools and perhaps threaten them: 'If you do not do this, look out! You will turn up', and so on. Is that what we want students to go through? I would have thought that in our system we wanted people to learn to think for themselves, to take responsibility for themselves and to realise that, if they do not do their part, society will not do its part for them. If they want to be slack and idle, so be it, but they should not expect great favours in this world. Life will be much harder than they thought it was.

I believe that voting is not much different. We are treating our voters as little children, perhaps even as secondary children. We are forcing them, saying, 'You will vote. You will go there.' The argument is that we are not forcing them actually to vote: if they want, they can change their mind and not put a mark on the ballot paper, but they have to get the ballot paper into their hand. I believe that we should be treating our voters as adults and giving them responsibility. We should be saying to them, 'If you are concerned about the way your State is going, what about taking an interest in it, finding out who your candidates are and deciding whether you think a person is worth voting for or not? If you think

none of the candidates is worth voting for, that is your democratic right. You do not have to turn up. Like at university, you do not have to turn up to lectures. The consequences in the long term may not be to your liking and, if you do not put into government people who will offer the best for you, it may not be the best for you in the long term.'

Much has been said from this side of the House in support of voluntary voting. I support the comments made by many other members, and I hope that the Labor Party will think carefully about this issue and realise that in the long term we shall get far superior government by offering voluntary voting to our citizens.

Mrs ROSENBERG (Kaurua): I support the Bill. It is clear to me that the opposition to voluntary voting rests purely and simply with the Democrats and the Labor Party, and I think we need to examine what promotes their basic objection to this change. First, let us examine the Democrats' stand on the issue. They have indicated through their Leader that they will side with Labor to continue the current system. They say they will do this because they do not believe in forcing people to vote as it will disfranchise them. The Leader of the Democrats in the other place stood for a Lower House seat in Davenport and was soundly defeated. He was defeated after he spent time door knocking 7 000 houses, he said. After door knocking those 7 000 houses and having himself as a candidate and his Party's policies soundly defeated, he now arrogantly defies the wishes of the people who wished to get rid of him and his policies, because he now sits in another place as a Legislative Councillor and says that he will defy the wishes of the people.

Even more arrogant is the honourable member's statement that he will help Labor to maintain a policy of compulsory voting in South Australia, even after the people of South Australia have so clearly rejected his policies. He and his Party have no mandate to ignore the people. They should remember the 11 December vote and accept the will of the people. Such actions as that, cost members of Parliament and the parliamentary process the respect of the people. We should honour their wishes and act as we have been chosen to do, that is, to act as the servants of the people.

Secondly, let us look at what the Leader of the Opposition has to say about compulsory voting. In a typically Arnold-speak statement to the *Advertiser* on 24 February 1994, he said that he would oppose the move towards voluntary voting because he did not believe it was a democratic process to abolish compulsory voting. I am not quite sure whether I understand that statement. It has to be a contradiction in terms. In other words, he believes that democracy is based on forcing people to do things.

Democracy, according to the *Macquarie Dictionary*, is 'a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them. . . under a free electoral system.' The word 'force', on the other hand, is defined as 'strength or power exerted upon an object' or to force a person. Liken this to the word 'compulsory', which equals 'compelled, forced or obligatory', as opposed to 'voluntary', which equals 'of one's own accord or by free choice.'

Under this Government's proposal to introduce voluntary voting to the people of South Australia, at last they will be living in a true democracy where no longer will they be forced to exercise their right. The Opposition is well entrenched in the business of forcing people to take part in its definition of 'democracy', and one needs to look no further than the union movement to validate that process.

In the 11 December 1993 election in South Australia, 60 000 people chose not to turn up at the polling booths to be crossed off the roll. On top of this, another large proportion of South Australians turned up and had their names crossed off, but then chose not to place a vote or to place an informal vote. For them the issue was compulsion to turn up, not a desire to vote.

It is clear that the introduction of voluntary voting will mean that these people on occasions will not vote, but they do not vote, anyway. Why are we worried about this group of people who already do not vote? Why are we suddenly so concerned about them? Why are we not doing something now? Why has not the Labor Party in the past 11 years done something to sort out the problems of those 60 000 people who already do not vote? Is the Labor Party not worried about those 60 000 people? All that will change is that the compulsion for them to turn up will be removed and the demeaning activity of receiving a 'Please explain' letter in the mail will also be removed.

An argument put forward by the Opposition is that the poor also will not vote in a voluntary system. I would like to ask the question: on what evidence is this based? Do they know the socioeconomic background of the 60 000 people who choose not to turn up and vote? More importantly, can they prove that the socioeconomic status of those who vote informally is low? If they do, they have some secrets that we do not about in the system of how they work out how people vote.

Local government voting in South Australia is voluntary, despite many moves by left wing unions to have voting made compulsory. A concerted effort in 1993 by the union movement to change the local government voting system was presented to the then Minister of Local Government Relations, Ms Levy. The outcome of this was that the decision was left totally open-ended and no decision was ever made.

It is interesting to surmise why the Government of the day did not use its majority and help the Democrats to force compulsory voting onto local government. Could it be that they do not have any real interest in such an important grass roots level of government in South Australia such that they do not feel it is necessary for people to vote for that level of government?

I have also heard the Opposition use the argument that voluntary voting would result in a poor voter turn-out as occurs in local government elections. My feeling is that the poor voter turnout in local government elections is a reflection of the importance that ratepayers see in the council decisions and what issues they see as being part of them before the time of the election. It is customary to have a high voter turnout in local government elections when there is a burning issue before the council around election time; otherwise, the ratepayers are simply not interested.

To carry this argument further, as does the Opposition, that the vote for State Parliament would also fall away to those small levels is not supported by any statistical evidence from other countries that have gone down this path. I will cite the same example that the member for Hart used earlier, that is, of Holland. The Dutch people accepted in 1970 to change from compulsory to voluntary voting. The turnout prior to the voluntary voting was 94 per cent—he got that right—and since 1970 it has stayed consistently at 84 per cent.

Examples in other countries suggest similar levels. The drop can be attributed to the number of people who already voted informally, who did not turn up or who created the donkey vote in past compulsory systems.

Non-compulsory voting is touted by its opponents, especially socialist Governments, as favouring conservative Governments. This is also not supported by any statistical facts. One has only to look at the American system to see that the Democrats, who are pretty closely aligned to the Labor Party, have consistently won the House of Representatives and have done so for 40 years. Just examine for one moment what they are saying. They suggest that if voting is voluntary more Liberals will vote than Labor or Democrat supporters and that they are generally the poor. How dare they demean their support base in this way by assuming that they follow them only because it is compulsory to vote for them. What little faith do members opposite have in their supporters? It is not the voters' fault that they do not continue to follow the Party and continue to vote: it is the fault of the Party that is seen as not worthy of their vote.

I applaud this aspect of voluntary voting, because members opposite will no longer be able to take the electorate for granted. Why are the opposing Parties afraid of granting this democratic right to our citizens? Why are they afraid of giving the public the right to reject us all? This will make each member work harder; it will make our job more difficult; and it will ensure that we deserve the vote we get. In fact, we will have to work for it for a change, like we do in marginal seats. If I had my way, every seat would be marginal.

Labor's argument that voluntary voting leaves many citizens unrepresented has to be seriously questioned, first, from the point of view that if that is true why did it not make the local government elections compulsory to make sure that everyone was represented? Secondly, it implies that they represent only those who vote for them. I am sure this side of the House is much more representative, and I would hope that the other side of the House becomes so.

If Labor was really so serious about getting total representation in the voting arena, why, over the past 11 years, has it not introduced a system to send postal votes to every single person in South Australia, to guarantee that every single person in South Australia voted or had ample opportunity to do so? Australia's Prime Minister, Mr Keating, recently tried to defend his attempts to decrease the Senate representation in smaller States. I quote the Prime Minister from the *Australian* of 4 March 1994:

This notion that senators of minority Parties parading themselves as agents of virtue in seeking to have accountability and beyond that simply holding any Government to ransom is not good for our democracy.

I wholeheartedly agree with this statement and suggest that the minority Party opposite and in the other place take heed of their Prime Minister.

Mr QUIRKE (Playford): I have been impressed by the arguments on both sides so far today. In fact, I think Mr Peake, whose portrait hangs from the wall in this place, would be somewhat proud of today's debate. I am not so sure that this highfalutin principle that has been displayed on both sides—to show my even-handed nature—is not masking the real ulterior motives. Mr Peake is probably one of the most favoured sons of the Tories in this State. I am not talking about the great survivor, the new member for Peake and the previous member for Hanson, who has survived through thick and thin for some years, but Mr Peake who was Premier, or Treasurer as he was called, of the State in the period 1912 to 1914, or thereabouts.

Mr Peake took over from the then Labor Government, the Verran Government, and he made a number of promises. One of those promises was that there would never be another Labor Government in South Australia because he and his Cabinet would draw up the electoral boundaries to ensure that that would be the case. Unfortunately, Mr Peake did not have the same survival instincts as the current member for Peake because not only did he not draw up the boundaries too well with his Cabinet colleagues but he in fact lost his own seat at the next State election.

When I bring people to visit this establishment, I always like to point out Mr Peake as somebody who started the Liberal Party in South Australia on the great road of electoral reform. A number of others carried on the tradition and, indeed—

Mr ROSSI: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I believe this argument is irrelevant to the debate in question.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): I will allow the honourable member to build his argument. The honourable member has only just risen to his feet.

Mr QUIRKE: I find this amazing. The member for Lee really ought to be picking on my colleague. My colleague, the member for Spence, is the one who has been getting into him, but I will get around to the member for Lee later. We see the tradition tonight of members opposite telling us what a wonderful world it will be without compulsion. The electorate has, at least in every seat, a third choice. In most seats it has a range of choices. A number of seats these days have many independent choices; some belong to the Liberal Party; some belong to other Parties who offer themselves as independents; and some indeed are genuine independents. The constituents of Playford in the 1993 election had a choice of five individuals who stood for that electorate. In some other electorates, I saw a candidate list of eight or nine, and so the range of choice was quite considerable.

Mr ROSSI: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I must stress that the topics the honourable member is talking about have nothing to do with voluntary voting.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I will not uphold the point of order. I have been listening and I know that the honourable member, over the past 10 to 15 seconds, might have strayed from the subject but he has been on the subject pretty well.

Mr QUIRKE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. You might like to tell the honourable member, when he rises to his feet in another minute's time, about frivolous points of order. At the end of the day the range of choice is considerable. What this Bill seeks to do is to provide a further choice.

Presumably, if the election is during winter, to go to the football and not vote; to go fishing and not vote; to go on holiday and not vote; or just to stay in bed or to watch television. All the arguments about principle I find a bit hard to swallow. It may have much more to do with the perceived advantage that the Liberal Party thinks it will have with compulsory voting.

Mr Rossi interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: Mr Acting Speaker, I would ask that that remark be withdrawn.

The ACTING SPEAKER: What is the comment you want withdrawn?

Mr QUIRKE: The comment was that I was a bloody rabbit, Sir.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Would the honourable member care to withdraw that comment?

Mr ROSSI: I withdraw the comment.

Mr QUIRKE: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for your protection.

Mr Caudell: He's just an ordinary rabbit.

Mr QUIRKE: I would have thought I was a high class one. We are being told here today that this issue is one of great moment and principle. I suspect that we are all sinners in this debate and it is really just to give some cynical advantage to the Liberal Party. I think it is my role tonight to let members of the Liberal Party down lightly on this issue. If ever they would have liked voluntary voting, it would have been on 11 December last year; I concede that. I believe that, had we had voluntary voting on 11 December last year, I may not have been here. A large number of people made it quite clear to me that they were going to vote for me on that day because they liked me and they thought I was a good member and because, possibly, they would be fined if they did not go and vote.

Unfortunately, that is the lot of long-term Governments, particularly Governments that have faced problems. In relation to the Government of which I was a member from 1989 to 1993, those very difficult problems, particularly the financial problems, did not do wonders for our support base. Indeed, it would be sufficient to say that a number of those problems may well have led some people to the view that they might have been better off on 11 December not going to vote, and I suspect that could have hurt the Labor Party. It may not have: I may be wrong, I do not know.

But if ever there was a time for the Liberal Party to have voluntary voting, if ever that strategy was going to work, 11 December was the time for it. I suspect that the next election might be a slightly different story. It is a number of years yet before that election is due, but the view around here is somewhat split among the members of the Liberal Party, a number of whom have come to members of the Opposition and said 'Look: we would like to see this defeated. We know this proposal is a high risk strategy.'

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr QUIRKE: Others around here see it as their only chance of survival. As we all know, 37 members representing a Party in this House is a record breaking number, and 80 per cent of the seats of this House were won on 60 per cent of the vote. If the Government continues as it has in the past 90 days, being big on making some decisions but not big on making many decisions, it will see the natural fall off that stems from a period in Government. I take the view that voluntary voting usually hurts incumbent Governments.

I think that is something Government members have not caught up with yet. I do not know that a lot of their more marginal members would support this measure. The member for Lee is a classic example—hapless and in many respects I think an extremely vulnerable target. I am only answering the provocation that took place earlier: it is my other colleague who seems to want to get into the member for Lee. However, at the end of the day, the member for Lee is here by 400 votes. He only has to have 200 people on his side decide that his eloquence in here is not worth while and he is dead meat.

It is possible that the Liberal members' strategy is that it will protect or somehow help their 37 members in here (and particularly their most vulnerable end to that—the first trench) by bringing in voluntary voting. I think that is a very high risk strategy, and there are some members of the Liberal Party, particularly country members, who are not as keen on

the idea of voluntary voting, because they think that it may well be a two-edged sword. Indeed, they could well lose members here because of voluntary voting in South Australia, particularly in some of the more remote areas, which I point out usually vote four or five to one in favour of the Liberal Party. In those situations, that is the way it may well go.

Voluntary voting could be a two-edged sword, but a number of the 37 members in here are very nervous not only about this Bill but also about the redistribution that will soon see new boundaries and a shift of a few suburbs that will make a very interesting pattern for the next State election.

Mr Rossi: At least we are self-sufficient; we don't get a pension like you people do.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): Order!

Mr QUIRKE: I am not sure what we are supposed to have pinched, Mr Acting Speaker, but if I carry on I may find out.

Mr Brindal: Pension, not pinch.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

The Hon. Frank Blevins interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: He does. In fact, the member for Ridley is a genius. At the end of the day, voluntary voting will be a very high risk strategy for a Government that has a large number of members in here, some of whom are here by only 300, 400 or 500 votes. With respect to the proposal to bring in voluntary voting, it needs to be made very clear that the arguments about choice and about this, that or the other really have not much to do with it.

The Liberal Party, with its resources, has deemed that it will put more cars and more effort into the field than the Labor Party will and that this will turn out a larger vote. That is the argument at the end of the day. That is what Senator Minchin wants to argue around the place. I understand that he is one of the great architects of this system. We may well have to deal with this at the Federal level should the Liberal Party win control of both Houses of Federal Parliament.

In fact, in my view (and I am realistic enough to realise this) we probably will have a voluntary system in operation either at the State or Federal level at some stage in the future. At some time in the future, we will probably have to live with that system. I do not believe we will vote for it now. I do not believe it will succeed now, but it may well succeed. If it does, there will be a spirited response from members on this side, although I suspect they are one election too late.

Let us deal with a couple of other matters. Should we trust the great Democrats over the way? Let us look at their record. First, what about the Legislative Council? The word 'mandate' has been used many times in here this afternoon. That is a very interesting word, because it was never heard in here from the members of the Liberal Party at any time in the 50s, 60s or 70s. At that time, the Legislative Council ran its own agenda and was not interested in any mandate. In fact, the word never even crept into the Liberal vocabulary until the Liberal Movement and a number of other developments in the mid-70s.

It is to the credit of the member for Goyder, as I believe the Hon. Steele Hall was at that time, that he saw the first great reform of the Liberal Party, which in 1969 ended the malapportionment under which one-third of the population of South Australia elected two-thirds of the members of this House. But the Liberals got him for it: it took a couple of years but they fixed him up. They got rid of the Hon. Steele Hall and he spent more than 20 years in the Federal wilderness. He was dumped in a dreadful fashion in 1972 and never

again rose to anything remotely associated with high office either at the Federal or the State level, because he was never forgiven for those basic democratic reforms in 1969.

The Liberal Party record is one where it propped up the Legislative Council and contended all the way through until the late 1970s that the argument of mandate did not exist. So, we find that that argument is now being used: the Liberal Party has suddenly discovered that it has a mandate. The Democrats and the Opposition members are supposed to quake because of the numbers that the Liberal Party had in the last election. Unfortunately for the Liberal Party, it fell one short in the Upper House. Indeed, we will exercise the right to review any legislation that comes before this House. At the end of the day the descendants of Mr Peake, whose portrait hangs behind members opposite, are not going to get away with this stunt at all.

I suggest that voluntary voting in South Australia will not happen yet, but if it does we will deal with it; we will marshal the same level of resources not only in our seats but in the marginal seats, and we will not be an incumbent Government riding on a record: it will be the Liberal Party, with a large number of seats that will fall by only a few per cent, which, after the redistribution, will reflect even further the swing back to us in the sense that we have only 20 per cent of the seats now on 40 per cent of the vote. It would take a very interesting redistribution to alter that in any way other than against the interests of the Liberal Party in South Australia.

The arguments advanced this afternoon by members of the Liberal Party are simple, and they do not surround free choice, because they are not offering that to all the car owners in South Australia. They are saying something like this: voluntary voting will hurt the Labor Party and advantage the Liberal Party, and that may save some more backsides in the next State election. Indeed, it would not make much difference what voting system was brought in for the member for Lee and a few others around here who will be victims as well. From most of the discussions I have had, the people around here most surprised that the member for Lee was elected were members of the Liberal Party themselves. In fact, they expressed to me absolute surprise that a number of colleagues such as the member for Lee and a few others were elected on 11 December.

I was not surprised, Mr Acting Speaker. I made the point on numerous occasions that I believed that the most number of seats we would win at that time was something in the order of 10, and I did that on the basis of a 30-year period largely in Government—a very long consecutive period in Government—coupled with a recession, a State Bank problem, an SGIC problem and numerous other problems, and a very hostile media in South Australia which at the end of the day would make it very difficult indeed for the Labor Party, and that prediction proved to be correct. I suggest that it may well be the case that the Liberal Party will be riding high at the next State election—that would not surprise me—but they will not be riding as high as they were on 11 December and, if they want to persist with giving people the opportunity of staying in bed instead of going out to vote, it is the incumbent Government that at the end of the day will feel the worst for that decision.

The Government can seek to put it through, it can take it seriously and do what members opposite threaten, saying that they will bring it back three times and make it a key issue and, if necessary, they will go to the people on it. That will be interesting. We would like that because the Government was elected by the people who have a view of a number of

things that are required to be done by it. No-one has rung me concerned about voluntary voting being one of those issues. At the end of the day, with 37 members and many of those being very marginal, the Government is undertaking a high risk strategy.

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS (Giles): I oppose the measure. Over the 19 years that I have been in this Parliament I seem to have spent an awful lot of time defending democracy from attacks by the Liberal Party. I do not intend to take the whole of my 20 minutes, because it is not necessary. If anyone is interested in my thoughts in this area, I refer them to the Parliamentary Library and to the volumes that I have spoken over the years on this topic. It seems that every time the Liberal Party comes anywhere near power, the first thing it goes for is the electoral system. There is something in them—not all of them, I admit—just something in the Liberal Party that wants to attack democracy. The Liberal Party has a real problem with it.

This matter is a Trevor Griffin special; there is no doubt about that. Apparently he has also got into the ear of Senator Minchin, which I think is a pity. I think Senator Minchin is better than this proposal. The Hon. Trevor Griffin is not, he is one of those members better suited to a previous century. Incidentally, he was probably the Liberal Cabinet Minister who did more to lose office for the Tonkin Government between 1979 and 1982 than any other Minister. If the majority of members opposite still choose to be wagged by the Trevor Griffin tail, that is their problem. I do not believe that the majority of members on the benches opposite give two hoots about this Bill.

Mr Rossi: What about members on this side?

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: Out of politeness I try to ignore some of the members on this side. I have never been given to calling names, even when it would be easy to do so, but that does not mean that I cannot do so. There are some members who for some reason or other have been tucked away on this side who already have the reputation of being the clowns or the fools of the Parliament. If they think that that is the way to gain some notice, then everyone runs their own race here and that is up to them.

One argument against compulsory voting is that compulsion is bad. This argument has been dealt with effectively. Compulsion is not necessarily bad. All the examples have been given of taxation, education and, in some cases, medical treatment and road laws, etc. In some areas I would extend compulsion, and there is no doubt about that. I would like to see compulsion extended to cover compulsory vaccination, but I doubt that that will occur.

I do not believe that anyone here believes that compulsion is inherently bad: it is more whether they happen to believe that the issue is worthy of such a significant measure. There is not one simple model for democracy. There is no country, whether it be Australia or anywhere else, which has any monopoly on democratic practice. To suggest that because there is voluntary voting in America and the United Kingdom that somehow they are better democracies than Australia is clearly nonsense and to suggest—and this was touched on by the member for Napier—that because the UK and America both have first past the post voting that somehow they are an inferior democracy is, likewise, a nonsense—neither is the case.

It is a matter of what is particularly suited to the individual country and what is the history of voting in that country. To say, as somebody suggested, that Prime Minister Major was

not democratically elected in the UK is quite wrong. Any suggestion that he was not democratically elected is wrong. Any suggestion that President Clinton in America was not democratically elected is wrong. The fact that they were elected by a different system to the one that we have only means that the system is different, not that it is necessarily inferior or better.

The Tasmanians in their Lower House have a system of PR, which not many people in this House would support. That does not mean that Tasmania is in any way deficient as a democracy, nor does it suggest that Tasmania is in any way superior to South Australia. Ireland also has a PR system. Those in Italy had a PR system but said they did not like it any more and they have changed to first past the post. Nobody would be able to persuade me that Italy both before and after the change is not a democracy. It is whatever works for the country that has it.

Some of the Liberal Party members who care about this Bill—and I think there are very few—seem to think that they would be advantaged by it in any event, not disadvantaged. I am not sure that that is true. Again, as the member for Napier suggested, we would have to see how it worked in practice. I would suggest to members opposite that if they want to maintain any credibility with me on this Bill, when they quote the UK and America as shining examples they should couple voluntary voting with first past the post, as do those two major democracies, arguably two of the world's greatest democracies. Of course, members opposite do not want that; they do not want the balance; they just want the bit that suits them.

Again, like the member for Napier, I do not necessarily believe that the measure would disadvantage the Labor Party. What tends to happen in these areas from the reading I have done is that if you are going bad in the electorate you go bad in a big way when you have voluntary voting; if you are doing well, you do even better. It seems to me that that is nothing to be particularly frightened of.

There has been a claim by the Liberal Government—the Premier in particular—that this Bill was a major part of the election campaign and therefore the Legislative Council ought not frustrate the will of the Government. I think that premise is wrong. It was not a major part of the campaign; it was a minor part of the campaign, as it ought to have been. I have no criticism of the Liberal Party for using this measure, along with voluntary unionism, just to get cheers out of the eastern suburbs set at the opening of their campaign. That is fair enough. We do things in our campaign openings to get cheers from our masses, too, but we do not necessarily take it all that seriously. But the blue rinse set obviously liked it at the opening, and that is fine; let them have a good day out.

But the question of the Legislative Council's role with this piece of legislation, or any piece of legislation for that matter, has already been determined. The precedents have long been set over at least 100 years, and including within the last 12 months. We do not have to go back 100 years to see the Legislative Council claiming the right to do as it wishes against a democratically elected Government. It has been saying that as long as I can remember, and it has been saying that within the past 12 months. I did caution the Deputy Leader when we were debating measures here, including budget Bills, when members opposite who were then in Opposition threatened the Government with action in the Legislative Council against some of the then Government's measures.

I did say that members opposite must have thought they would be in Opposition forever. I would have thought they would be a little more cautious in throwing the weight of the Legislative Council around but, no, they chose not to listen and they continually stated the position that the Legislative Council had an absolute right to do as it wished.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. FRANK BLEVINS: The interjector over there says that it all sounds very righteous. I think we have long reached a position where there can be little or no criticism of the Legislative Council for what it does. Except that all members of the Legislative Council do not go to the people at the same time, it is a democratically elected House, with a PR system. I am not fussed about the PR, first-past-the-post or preferential systems. They all have their merits, and they all generally produce a representative result. The Legislative Council has been elected that way. Every member of the Labor Party in the Legislative Council has gone to the people on a particular platform, and every member of the Democrats has done the same.

If you go to the people on a particular platform, you are elected to Parliament on that platform. If you see yourself as a delegate, you have an obligation to vote as you told the electors you would prior to that election. I see nothing terribly wrong with that. It is something Governments have to live with. The Labor Government lived with it for many years and managed reasonably well. I do not think the problems we had over the past decade were due in any great measure to the Legislative Council; I think they were more self-inflicted. The measure should not be supported, because compulsory voting is very much ingrained in the Australian system.

There are other things that Australia does differently from other countries, such as the UK and America. I am not saying they are better or worse—I happen to believe that most of them are better, but that is not the point—they are different. Australia has its own heritage, and I believe it has a very good system. It works well for Australia and I see absolutely no reason why we should change it. I conclude by making the point that I do not believe there is necessarily any advantage or disadvantage in this measure to any Party. If the few people opposite who care about the issue (and I suggest they are very few) think that there is some advantage in it for them, they will have a very rude awakening at the elections if this measure is implemented. I oppose the Bill.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Like the member for Giles, I do not intend to spend 20 minutes talking about this subject, but there are some relevant points that I would like to bring to the attention of the House. It was interesting that the member for Giles talked about platforms. That is the specific reason why I am keen to be involved in this debate; it is the fact that we had a platform to introduce non-compulsory voting that I am speaking now. On 11 December 1993 the people of South Australia clearly indicated that they wanted non-compulsory voting, and it is now our duty as elected representatives to make sure that their wishes are carried through.

I can see that the member for Playford is pretty keen to sit on our benches. That is no wonder, given his concerns about whether he will ever be in Government again. The honourable member spoke about the Hon. Steele Hall and how he may have been jeopardised. The fact is that the Hon. Steele Hall stands for what the Liberal Party stands for; that is, fairness and democracy. That is why the Hon. Steele Hall did what he did back in 1971 or 1972. It is more a matter within the

Liberal Party of fairness and democracy and of giving people the opportunity to make their own choice. On the other hand, the Labor Party puts people in a situation where they are forced into things such as unionism. There is also the way in which members opposite are preselected versus the way in which members on this side are preselected. The whole issue is really about fairness and democracy.

People should be given a democratic right to make their own decision about whether or not they will vote. In fact, that was backed up only today when I was speaking to a lady who said that, if we did not have compulsory voting and she did not vote, she would have no right to complain. In other words, she was saying that it is up to the individual; they have to be responsible for whether they go to the polls and who they chose as the elected Government to represent them and to improve and enhance the State—

Mr Brindal: She must have been listening to my speech.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: She may well have done: most of your speeches are very good. She was clearly saying that it is a matter of choice. One of the problems that we have had for so long is that people have resented the fact that they have to go to the polls. One only has to scrutineer in a polling booth to see some of the comments on the ballot papers, because they indicate that people are very frustrated and often angry that they have been forced to go to the polls.

This lady is right: if you are interested in your State, if you believe in the future of your State, you will make a democratic decision to go to the polling booth thinking about what you should be doing and making a conscious decision. It gets back to a choice that one should have the right to make or not to make.

That is backed up, as has already been said but it should be reinforced, by the American and English scenarios where people are not forced to vote. When Prime Minister Thatcher was doing a good job addressing the deep-seated problems in England, the turnout was not very great because the people were happy and satisfied with their elected representatives. When Clinton came into office clearly the people were not happy and satisfied and there was a large increase in the number of people who went to the polls.

People do think, they do make decisions and they do not need to be forced to the polls to make a decision about whom they want to govern them. They believe in Australia's being a place where there is freedom of choice. I really cannot see for the life of me what the Opposition is on about, other than the fact that it appears to be scared about its future.

Mr Brindal: They don't know what they are on about, anyway, so why should you?

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I have trouble working out what they are on about, and so do the people of South Australia. That was shown in December when they clearly gave the Labor Government the message that it was way off track. The South Australian people are highly intelligent, and that was illustrated on 11 December. They make decisions; they watch what happens; they believe in their State; they look at what their members are doing; they look at how their State is progressing; and they will make a decision of their own choice as to whether or not they feel that they should go to the polls and support a Government or give the message to that Government that they are not happy and that they want a change.

In fact, that was clearly shown at the last election when 8 per cent of the voters simply did not vote. An enormous number of people did not vote because they clearly objected to the fact that they were compelled to vote. I know that many

more people would not have voted if it had not been for the fact that they were already battling and could not afford to face, I think, a \$50 fine purely because they did not want to have to make a choice about whether or not to vote. Some of those people have indicated their feelings clearly on the ballot paper.

I guess the message to the Opposition is that this is not about whether voting should be compulsory or non-compulsory. If members do a good job in Government, if they look after their electorate, if they think about what the people need and talk to the people—and not the hierarchy or the power-hungry people at the top but the genuine rank and file people who are the backbone of this State—the electorate will react accordingly. They will not turn out to the same extent if members do the opposite, which is clearly what members opposite did for at least two terms: they forgot about what they should have been doing to represent the people of South Australia.

They went on their own self-indulgent, incompetent and totally inept track, and in doing so brought down this State. It is a matter of our doing a good job and not being scared about whether the people will go to the polls, because if you do a good job the people will support you. We have inherited a massive burden for this State, something which, as I have already said in this House, will take at least 10 years of prudent management to correct. When our Premier has clearly identified a saving of about \$150 000 to \$160 000 and when that money is crying out to be spent in the areas of health and education and many other areas that have been run down over such a long time, why should we waste that sort of money on top of the fact that we have a million dollar man out there whom we have to pay as well—

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: We have not sacked any public servants. The only people who got the sack were the people who your Leader clearly admitted were members of the Labor Party, who were given a free ride and who were a big part of the problems that you have put before our children and their children to come. Remember that. You were on the gravy train. It is obvious that you did very well on the gravy train. I only have to look at the condition of you now to see that you did pretty well. Get out into the real world and have a look at the people who have not even been able to put any gravy on their plate. You have been in that ivory tower for too long, like those people whom we had to get rid of, because they, together with you, are the reason why many of us are here today debating the fact—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Exactly—that we have to give people the right to make their own decisions and not to have things forced upon them. It is clearly evident that forcing things upon people is not what they want.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Don't worry; I'd rather have my looks than yours. You ought to get a mirror and have a look in it one day. In fact, I might bring one for you.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I have had my jackboots on plenty of times, because I get out there and get my hands dirty. How many times have you got your hands dirty?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I apologise for those comments, Mr Deputy Speaker. The fact is that we can save \$150 000 or \$160 000 and spend it in the direction in which it should

be spent, notwithstanding the fact that many people suffer from stress and anxiety when they receive a letter from the Electoral Commission saying, 'Please explain why you did not vote, and send us a cheque for \$50.'

Mr Brindal: Somebody nearly had a nervous breakdown.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I am sure they did. In fact, while I was sitting at home waiting for the voting results for my own seat, an absolutely stressed out lady rang me because her son was racing to get over the border from Victoria where he had been working purely because he was concerned about being fined. That is exactly the sort of argument I am putting forward. He also wanted to vote because he wanted a Liberal Government. I was very proud of that, and I will never forget it. Liberals are open and honest, and they show their policies, and that is very different from Labor: I did not see any policies before the last election. We threw this clearly defined policy out to the electorate in black and white saying that we would bring in non-compulsory voting, because that was the message we were getting from the people. They were sick to death of not being able to make their own decisions.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHIRE: What did you do? The Labor Party ran a scare campaign. It did not put up a policy about whether there should be compulsory or non-compulsory voting: it simply ran a scare campaign. Today, it is debating this issue about compulsory or non-compulsory voting because once again it is scared. We must remember the mandate we received as a result of the fact that we clearly tabled our policies. The people of South Australia voted for us and gave us that mandate. We are now obligated to honour those commitments.

People in the electorate deserve the opportunity to make choices and decisions. After all, is not that one of the greatest treasures that we have in Australia, albeit that it has been eroded by both the previous State Government and the present Federal Government? Keating obviously does not believe in choices about whether you should or should not vote. He does not believe in democracy, accountability and freedom of choice. But the people of South Australia have shown that they want to endorse what we are offering and getting on with in this State—open, honest, accountable, Brown Liberal Government policies which were clearly laid on the table prior to the election and which ultimately stated that people would have freedom of choice.

I am committed, on behalf of the voters of South Australia in my own electorate, to supporting this well structured, well presented and very fair Bill to abolish compulsory voting and let South Australians make their own decisions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Ross Smith.

Mr Brindal: Oh no!

Mr CLARKE (Ross Smith): You are free to leave at any time: in fact, I wish you would. Listening to the debate from the other side of the Chamber, I have never heard a greater pack of whingers than I have heard over the past few weeks. You would think they had lost the election.

Mr BRINDAL: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it was the Speaker himself who spoke about the use of unparliamentary language. I do not think there is any call for the honourable member to refer to members on the Government benches as whingers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The term is not really unparliamentary, although earlier today the Speaker did ask that members speak decorously rather than emulate the practice of another Government far away in the mountains.

Mr CLARKE: I thought I had toned it down, Mr Deputy Speaker. The debate tonight revolves around two diametrically opposed philosophical points. There is the Government's view that it is a civil liberties matter and that in a democratic society it is the right of a citizen to choose freely whether or not they wish to participate in the electoral process by voting; and there is our view which is based on the principle that it is not only the right of citizens to vote but also their duty to participate in the electoral process by fronting up and voting. Indeed, as has been pointed out by other speakers, they do not actually have to vote: they only have to turn up and be given a ballot paper, and then they may choose to throw the ballot paper away. But 96 per cent of electors who turn up to the polling booth cast a formal vote, and that is a healthy process for democracy.

I do not believe there is anything particularly onerous or oppressive in society through its Parliament saying to its citizens, 'We expect you to turn up to the polling booth once every four years to determine who your Government will be.' Three years is the bare minimum, unless the Government collapses. When I was door knocking in my electorate, I did not have people saying to me, 'I am deliberately going to vote against you, because it is such an imposition to have to front up and vote on a Saturday or to turn up to the polling booth to receive the ballot paper.' I could tell you a lot of other things they spoke to me about. They talked about the State Bank, the SGIC, unemployment, schools and a whole host of other areas in which they thought we were not doing as much as we should have been doing in terms of representing their interests. The electorate spoke very forcibly. Hence, there are 37 members opposite, including a few strays on our side of the Chamber, and the fact of the matter is—

Mr VENNING: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it is unparliamentary language to call any member of Parliament a stray.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must admit that I did not hear the honourable member's comment. I will listen very diligently to ensure that he does not use unparliamentary language.

Mr VENNING: He referred to members on this side of the House as strays.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member is using collective nouns and as such they tend to be permitted, whereas criticism of an individual member is not. I ask the honourable member to speak decorously.

Mr CLARKE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The fact of the matter is that, as we have heard from a number of Opposition members, we had voluntary voting in South Australia but only 50 per cent of eligible voters turned up to vote. That is just not good enough. If we have to impose a duty on individual citizens by saying, 'If you do not turn up to register or receive your ballot-paper you will be fined,' that is not harsh or oppressive. It is correct for the citizens of this State collectively to say that as part of good government they want the maximum participation from citizens in deciding who should form their Government.

Despite all the strenuous efforts of the Local Government Association to encourage voting at local government level—and I think all of us, on whichever side we may sit, appreciate the real tasks and great responsibilities that local government has to perform on behalf of our citizens—less than 20 per cent of ratepayers take it upon themselves to record a vote on election day.

I think we must also consider the potential for elections to be manipulated with a small voter turnout. I want to use

my own experience as a union official with respect to that matter. I have no problems whatsoever about having compulsory voting in trade union elections. Indeed, the Waterside Workers Federation had compulsory voting as a matter of practice and in its rules. It would probably have been struck down by the Industrial Court as being harsh and oppressive, but it had a rule for many years that members had to front up and vote at a secret ballot at the various ports.

Mr Tiernan interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: There are secret postal ballots. If the honourable member would get his head out of the sand, he would understand a few of the basic things of life. The member for Florey, as a former Secretary of the Police Association, knows only too well the requirements under the Industrial Relations Act with respect to the election of office holders.

However, one of the points that we need to look at when using unions as an example for voluntary voting is that, unfortunately, not enough members take sufficient interest to vote. For example, in 1981 there was a ballot in my union. It was the first contested election since 1956, and there was a 40 per cent voter turnout and, compared to other unions, that was very high. We had successive contested elections in 1982, 1984 and 1985. The more frequent the ballots, the fewer the numbers of people who participated. By 1985, instead of more than 40 per cent of members voting, only 33 per cent voted. The 1985 election was very hotly contested with telephone canvassing—

Members interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: It was all perfectly legitimate. There was telephone canvassing, direct postal applications, direct mails, personal visits and the like. With respect to other branches of my union, the Federated Clerks Union of Australia, as it then was, New South Wales had a series of hotly contested elections between 1981 and 1989. I should know that because I was helping to try to organise the numbers against those who had control of the New South Wales branch in those days. About 26 to 28 per cent was the average voter turnout in New South Wales. In our Victorian branch, which has had a long history of contested union elections, the average voter turnout over the past 10 years has been about 35 per cent. If they wanted to, it was very easy for people to manipulate the system. You only have to look back at the last voters' roll to find out which member had cast a vote, as their name would have been ruled out on the voters' roll. The same happens when you turn up to the polling booth on election day: the returning officer strikes out your name on a voter's roll.

So, it is quite easy then to work out who has voted in the past. They have demonstrated an interest in voting in the election, so you know that you are half way there. You can then go to those people and hopefully convince them to vote for you. In addition, you can target those people through sophisticated campaign techniques, because you know that, if on average about only 36 per cent of members participate in a vote, you need only roughly 15 per cent of eligible members voting for you, plus one, to win control of the whole show. That process is well known, and it is used not just in trade union elections but also very extensively in local government elections.

I do not believe that is a desirable outcome, because the candidate panders to a narrow group. Likewise, interested minority groups can motivate people with a single issue, whether it be gun control, save the ducks, save the whales, or whatever. They can go to political candidates and say, 'Look, on average only about 30 per cent will vote.' I might add that,

if it was the seat of Unley, for example, and people were faced with the prospect of voting for or against the current member, no doubt you would probably get a 100 per cent turnout because people would want to express a view about the member for Unley.

However, in other seats there would be a much lower voter turnout, and they could threaten the candidates concerned by saying that they had to toe a particular minority line or, as they quite unashamedly do in the United States, by saying 'To hell with gun control laws; we can motivate enough people in your congressional district to knock you off if you vote for him.' That does not lead, and indeed has not led, to good government. What it does do is alienate people from the political process.

In the United States the very people who should be most active in political affairs, those who have the most to lose, particularly with conservative Governments (the blacks, the Hispanics, the poor and the dispossessed) do not vote, because they feel alienated from the process. They do not believe their votes count, because it is the usual 40 per cent who turn up to vote in the voluntary voting exercise, particularly the majority of Jerry Falwell or the National Rifleman's Association, and they feel alienated from the entire political process. That is not healthy for the Australian political system.

I might also say—and this is a point I raised in my maiden speech—that I believe it is a lot of cant and humbug for members opposite to adopt this attitude. This applies particularly to the member for Mawson, given the emotion he displayed and given that he is involved with the issues of civil liberties and the rights of free men and women to choose to vote, and so on. The Party to which that honourable member belongs supported the conscription of young men, denying them the right to vote at age 20 years, and sent them to Vietnam to kill or be killed. That is the hypocrisy of the member for Mawson: put them in khaki; send them overseas to kill or be killed; compel them to do so; compel them to register and, if they do not register—

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like your ruling on the relevance of conscription in Vietnam to the debate which is now engaging this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member did link his remarks directly to the matter in hand. I will ask him to resume.

Mr FOLEY: I rise on a point of order, Sir. The member for Mawson is interjecting out of his seat and I ask that you rule.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have been listening carefully to the member for Mawson and the only time he interjected out of his seat was about seven minutes ago, and he has said nothing since. The honourable member is a little belated.

Mr CLARKE: That is the humbug of the members opposite because, yes, you compelled young men to enrol for National Service. If they did not enrol and if they burnt their draft cards they were chased by ASIO, they were chased by the Federal Police and they were gaoled. This is the Party that alleges it stands for personal liberties, when it is up to its armpits in the blood of young men serving in Vietnam. It is absolute hypocrisy for members of the Liberal Party to claim civil liberties when they are more than happy to see young Australian men not given the vote and put to the death because of their actions when they would not give those young men the vote.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRINDAL: I object very strongly to the member who just implied that our Party put people to death in the matter of Vietnam. I take personal exception to that and I ask that he withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I can understand that the comments are provocative and the honourable member has every right to take exception, but I cannot uphold the point of order. I would suggest to the member for Ross Smith that his remarks are going far wider than this Bill. I draw his attention to the fact that in this debate he should refer purely to the aspects of voluntary voting. Members have been given a considerable amount of latitude but he has gone far beyond it.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: I rise on a point of order, Sir. I realise the member for Ross Smith is a new chum but—

The SPEAKER: A new member.

Mr Clarke: And you are a patronising—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The honourable member has been warned previously. He will withdraw the reflection he made on the Minister or I will name him forthwith.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There will be no interjections.

Mr CLARKE: I withdraw, Sir.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member for Ross Smith, on numerous occasions, has referred to members on this side of the House as 'they'. There are parliamentary procedures and we are not to be referred to in that manner. I would ask that you, Sir, suggest that he refer to us as 'the members opposite'.

The SPEAKER: I can uphold the point of order, even though this evening a number of members have referred to members other than by their district. Members must refer to members opposite or their colleagues by their district.

Mr CLARKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. You will be pleased to know that I will be winding up in just a moment. The purpose of my drawing that comparison is simply to illustrate the humbug on the members of the Liberal Party to talk about freedom of choice. There is no point in the member for Unley saying, 'Look, we did not do all this.' They got a bit lost on the way to Damascus. The fact of the matter is that the Liberal Party has its policy, and it went to the polls in 1966 and 1969 supporting the war in Vietnam. It was their Party that passed the Acts of Parliament—

Mr CAUDELL: I rise on a point of order, Sir. You have warned the member for Ross Smith. The issue of Vietnam has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bill that we are debating. I would appreciate it if you could ask the member to return to the debate.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order and ask the member for Ross Smith to refer his comments to the Bill.

Mr CLARKE: I have made my points sufficiently about that. If I were a member of the Liberal Party, sitting on the Treasury bench, I too would be ashamed of my Party's role in the Vietnam war and the murder of hundreds and thousands of innocents.

Mr VENNING (Custance): I support this Bill with the full support of my constituents in Custance. We have heard so much in this place today about democracy, particularly from members of the Opposition. I listened with great interest earlier in the day to the member for Napier, a new member, who said that everyone's vote is equal: the rich and the poor,

the privileged and underprivileged. That is dead correct: there is no argument or debate about this. Under this legislation they are equal, and a great injustice was perpetrated when the Government in the 1970s brought in one vote, one value. That was the big evil: not that that was wrong, but it did the job by half. We gave equality but we did not give freedom. So, that was a travesty of justice.

We would all agree that all are equal before the law and before the Parliament. One vote, one value is just. But so is freedom. Freedom is the right to vote or not to vote. How many democracies in the world, particularly those with which we are aligned naturally through treaties as well as through our heritage, compel their people to vote? Venezuela, Belgium, Greece and Luxembourg are the major democracies that still insist on compulsory voting. But where are our natural partners, the English, the Americans and the Canadians? They do not have compulsory voting.

These are the countries that we put up as role models, the countries we like to emulate in trade, in culture and in every other way. Even Japan, on the other side of the spectrum, we often try to emulate, since it has been a very successful country. It does not compel its people to vote. Do they all have it wrong? Do they all have a disease? What is wrong with them?

Mr Clarke: Look at their economic growth.

Mr VENNING: The development of Japan since the Second World War has been incredible. When you see where Japan has gone in the past 25 years and where we have gone, the only place we saw them was as they swished past the other way as we were going down and they were going up. The comparison really begs the question when we see which other countries compel their people to vote, and it really gets under my skin to hear members of the Opposition today trying to put up a very thin, discredited argument about compulsory voting. We in Australia force our people to vote: there are no two ways about that. We say 'If you don't vote, we will fine you \$50.'

I find it absolutely incredible. In this modern day and age in Australia we talk about freedom for everyone, yet when we have an election we make people vote. This is the second level of government in which I have had the honour to serve. In the first level, local government, I served 10 years. That was voluntary voting, and in my first election we got out and worked and 96 per cent of people rocked up to vote. And it would have been better if a man had not died the night before. So, this is democracy, because you must get your supporters out to vote. If you do not do the job, if you do not excite interest, you do not win. I won that first vote with 70 per cent of a 96 per cent vote, so I democratically won the election.

We force our people to vote, because if they do not vote they are fined \$50. I am absolutely flabbergasted that members opposite talk about their various principles, yet they get up there and say 'If you don't vote, it is a \$50 fine.' No wonder the people of Australia are so cynical (to say the least) about politics generally. Only 7 per cent of Australians take an active part in the political process, whether it be people who support Labor, Liberal or even the Democrats. Why is that so? Because we force this on people. They could not care less. That is why we have had some very poor Governments in the past 25 years. If voting is made voluntary, it is human nature that they will take a lot more active interest.

No wonder also that our political Parties play cynical political games. No wonder we have cynical exercises like the sports rorts affair in Canberra, involving the white board.

Certain areas are targeted for treatment. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker, it becomes very obvious to us all that Governments are won or lost in marginal seats and, particularly in South Australia until recently, Government was won or lost in three or four key seats. It was far too predictable. Compulsory voting has totally ruined our political process in Australia.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr VENNING: This is a very important issue. Compulsory voting has brought far too much predictability to our system. Anybody can sit back and, with a little calculator, work out what is happening. I am in a blue ribbon seat, as is the member for Ross Smith who is making all this noise here tonight. I could say I am kicking myself in the backside by making this speech, and I probably am. I hope that people will judge me as being a member in a blue ribbon seat where I have worked my area hard from the day I was elected, and I am still working hard, because the people of my electorate deserve as equal a representation as anybody else in this House, whether or not it involves a blue ribbon seat.

That is the problem: blue ribbon seats do not get any money from Governments. If members want proof of that, go and look at Port Adelaide, Port Pirie, Port Augusta or Whyalla—until recently the Labor Party's blue ribbon seats. They did not get any money. They were blue ribbon seats, but they certainly are not now. Labor's neglect has cost it those seats. All of those towns but one are now true blue Liberal seats. So, they are hoist with their own petard.

I know that compulsory voting would keep me a lot safer in a blue ribbon seat. That is not democratic. In no way will I stand in this House and be a hypocrite. Governments of both persuasions over the years know where they will win or lose elections: in those three or four marginal seats. Guess where the Government puts all its efforts! If that is not cynical, I do not know what is. Particularly today, with our polling practices and very adept calculators, you do not have to be very bright to work out where you will spend your money. Members only need to travel around in those key seats in Adelaide to see where the new projects are—the good roads, sports clubs and new schools.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Custance should not encourage interjections and the member for Ross Smith should not continue interjecting.

Mr VENNING: Sorry, Mr Speaker, I did not think I was. I thought I was putting my point as strongly as I could. I want to speak with all the conviction I have. I firmly believe that the political process has not been well served by compulsory voting. It is also fair to say that compulsory voting has been one of the major reasons why we have seen so much decentralisation in South Australia. We have seen our regional areas lose so much Government attention (from both sides) because of the marginal electorates, of which in the past there have been very few in country areas.

It is the absolute right of a citizen to vote: it should not be a duty. No Government should have the power to direct any citizen in the use of his or her vote. South Australia has led the way previously: 100 years ago this Parliament gave women the right to vote. Today and tomorrow this Parliament will lead Australia in introducing voluntary voting. All members would agree that on 11 December the new Liberal Government was elected with a pretty reasonable majority: there could be no argument with that. I do not hear a single word from the Opposition. Part of the Liberal manifesto which received prominence was voluntary voting.

To say that the new Government has a mandate for this legislation is indeed an understatement: no member can argue with that. It was there in the manifesto; the people of South Australia knew it was there, and they voted for and elected this Government. What right has any Party to deny the will of the people? I challenge any Party in either House to say that the Liberal Party does not have a mandate for this legislation, because it certainly has. It was a very prominent part of the Liberal Party's manifesto prior to the election and we won that election with a very good majority. With democracy being exercised as it ought to be in this place, this measure should go through the Parliament unopposed and we should be leading Australia as the first State to implement voluntary voting. I support this Bill with all the strength that I can muster.

The Hon. M.H. ARMITAGE (Minister for Health): I move:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 10 p.m.

Motion carried.

Mr De LAINE (Price): I strongly oppose this Bill, and in doing so I canvass, first, some of the arguments put in the Premier's second reading explanation. As an example of non-compulsion to vote the Premier refers to countries like India and the Philippines. What an example to quote: he could not have used better examples to support the Opposition's case to retain compulsory voting when we look at the way those countries run their affairs. So that aspect of his argument is absolutely ridiculous.

South Australia has had compulsory voting for the past 42 years, 1944 being the first election at which it was instituted. The Premier spoke about freedom of choice in respect of voting. Enrolment is not compulsory, and one has a choice of methods to use in order to vote, such as postal or absentee voting; voters are free to choose to vote for whichever candidate or Party they support: there is no compulsion to mark the voting paper, as some other members have said; and there is no compulsion to even go to the polling booth to vote, as people risk only a very small fine if they decide not to go to the polling booth. They have the choice as to whether they abide by or break the law at any time; that is part of democracy. If they choose to break the law they pay the penalty. It is the same case in relation to voting: if you do not wish to go along and vote, you risk incurring a very small fine. In his second reading explanation the Premier stated:

In countries with voluntary voting there is no doubt that candidates and Party machines are more active in endeavouring to persuade the electors to go to the polling booths and to vote for them. On the contrary, Mr Speaker: in a situation of compulsory voting candidates and Parties have to be far more active in order to try to convince all potential constituents to vote for them, rather than just having to convince key individuals and pressure groups, as they do in the case of voluntary voting. The Premier further stated:

In Australia for a very long time compulsory voting has removed the need for Parties to get out the voters on election day, and to canvass every household.

That is absolute rubbish: all candidates canvass every household in election campaigns. We see that, at every election, all Parties seem to spend more and more money on canvassing every household in their electorates and on putting out more information to try to win the votes necessary to form a Government.

The Australian States are among the most stable and democratic in the world, and that is a true indication of how our system works. The old saying, 'If it works, don't fix it', is most applicable: we have a good system and we should leave it alone. The system in South Australia was corrupt. Under that system we saw conservative Governments in power for many decades. After about 25 years the Hon. Don Dunstan was responsible for obtaining one vote one value in this State, but that system became too fair for the present Government and for its own selfish political reasons it now seeks to sabotage the system and introduce this outrageous non-compulsory voting system.

The Bill will be passed in this House but, if it is passed by the Legislative Council, it will be the thin edge of the wedge in losing democracy. Once the Government gets rid of compulsory voting, it can then call elections on weekdays in mid-winter to try to discourage people from voting and it can adopt any other frustrating methods that it can come up with.

When we look at local government elections over the years one is confronted with the typical example of providing transport to get people to polling booths. The emphasis there is that all the energy is put into arranging transport for people whom the Government knows will support it. The emphasis is placed on transport and not on policies. As we know with local government elections, the most common result over the years is a voter turnout of between 8 and 15 per cent, which would also be the case if we had non-compulsory voting at State or Federal level.

The Premier claims that under the Bill the 2 per cent donkey vote will be eliminated, but that is absolute rubbish. The donkey vote still occurs in local government elections, and that can be seen if members scrutineer and look at the voting results. The donkey vote still happens, so the Premier's argument is stupid. The Premier refers to the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada as democracies that do not have compulsory voting. He then claims that only a small minority of western democracies have compulsory voting.

In fact, 29 countries including Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy and Switzerland have compulsory voting. They are hardly a small minority and are hardly insignificant countries. The Premier makes it sound as if we are out of step with the rest of the world in having compulsory voting. What is wrong with being pacesetters here in South Australia? We have been pacesetters previously and we were the second country in the world to provide the right to vote for women, which is particularly important to recognise in this year of the Centenary of Women's Suffrage.

We were pacesetters then and there is no reason why we should not be pacesetters now. After the election the Premier said that his Government had an overwhelming majority and a massive mandate for the abolition of compulsory voting. So far as I am concerned the abolition of compulsory voting was not a major plank in the Liberal election policy. True, it was mentioned a few times but it was certainly not a major plank and I fail to see where the Government has a massive mandate on this matter.

The Government has referred to the Legislative Council and the Premier has said that he does not want to see, considering the Government's massive majority, any legislation frustrated in the Legislative Council. However, for almost all the past 138 years the conservatives have had total control of the Legislative Council under the grossly unfair property franchise system and they did not worry about frustrating Labor Governments when they butchered much

of the legislation dealt with by the Legislative Council in those days.

As to the mandate that Government members believe they have, they have a mandate and there is no question that they have a majority, but it is not as big a majority as they like to think it is. In 1989 the Liberals obtained 52 per cent of the vote and now the Liberal Government has obtained 61 per cent of the vote, which is an increase of only 9 per cent, yet the Government has gained a percentage increase in seats from 49 per cent to 79 per cent. In other words, the Liberal Government has increased its vote over the past years by 9 per cent and it has increased the number of seats held by 30 per cent.

This shows that the system is not working: it is still not one vote one value and the system needs to be rectified on the basis of the previous distribution and boundaries. The number of seats obtained does not truly reflect the massive mandate that the Liberal members think they have. True, it is a mandate but not as massive as they say it is.

They complain about compulsion, but we have compulsion in a lot of other areas in our society. We have compulsion to send children to school to be educated, we have compulsion for sticking to road laws, etc., and no-one complains about that. So why complain about this compulsion? As I said, the choice is still there whether to vote or not, but one does not have to vote if they do not wish. As the Premier said, the United States system is a very democratic one and not compulsory, but we see an enormous amount of time and energy wasted in the United States in very long campaigns, trying to get people to vote rather than concentrate on policies. The campaigns are very long and costly and interrupt probably half of each term of Government in that country. History shows that Western democracies with non-compulsory voting average about 55 per cent in voter turnout.

When I speak to new citizens at citizenship ceremonies I emphasise that being Australian gives certain rights and privileges but it also carries responsibilities, and voting is one of those most important responsibilities. Some of these people come from overseas countries that have been devastated by war and dictatorships, and they are dying for the right to vote. We have that right in Australia and in South Australia, and the Liberals seem intent on destroying it, albeit not in one stroke, but the abolition of compulsory voting is stage one. It is the thin edge of the wedge. If this legislation is carried we will see a further erosion of people's rights and we will get back to the old days when it was a very unjust system.

Voluntary voting produces governments that are not representative of the people, and we have seen that in many countries around the world. Luckily it does not happen here. Voluntary voting increases inducements, increases the chance of graft and corruption and puts enormous pressure on some people and some groups to get into power. Compulsory voting encourages and fosters political education, and that is what we wish to see. Australians generally are slow to become politically aware, and compulsory voting will continue to encourage political education in that regard.

Many of the points have been made, but I will conclude by saying that the compulsory voting system plus the preferential system we have in South Australia is the fairest system in the world. It is a system that has stood the test of time. It works well. As I say, if it works, do not change it. It should be jealously guarded so that we avoid gradually falling into the problems of some other countries and perhaps in the end becoming a dictatorship. I strongly oppose the Bill.

Mr BECKER (Peake): Sir, I support this legislation. The Liberal Party can confidently say that it has a mandate for this issue, because it is not the first time that it has gone to the people and asked for support for voluntary voting. We have canvassed the issue on other occasions. Having now contested nine State elections and found on each occasion the support of the people for voluntary voting, I find it very difficult for the Opposition to say that this issue is not wanted by the people. It is. The only people who are really concerned about politics in South Australia are the members of the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and a few other little fringe political organisations, including the Democrats (who, I remind everybody, have once again lost their deposit in my electorate, who only received about 6 per cent of the vote overall and who are far in the minority), as well as a few people associated with those political organisations.

Those people will vote every time there is an election, but the vast majority of South Australians are absolutely fed up to the point where they are disgusted at the tactics and the antics of most politicians. They do not trust us, they do not believe in what we say we want to do for them and they really do not take politics in this country seriously. The same thing applies in the trade union movement. I had eight years there too, and I know all about it. I contested an election. I know what voluntary voting is in the trade union movement, and I know the battles we fought to introduce secret ballots in the trade unions, but we were always opposed. Bob Hawke and all the left wing radicals and the heavies in the organisation never wanted secret ballots, because they could not put pressure on the average workers to ensure that they voted the way they wanted. It is the most corrupt system anywhere in the world, and there have been plenty of brawls, broken noses and broken knuckles over the way some trade unions conducted their elections.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

Mr BECKER: That is not so; you know it, and anybody worth their salt in the trade union movement knows what thuggery goes on and has gone on in some of the unions in this country. We do not want that. What we want is the right of people to choose to vote, to give them the opportunity to vote for whoever they want, and to reward those who represent them in the best manner and in the interests of the people and the country. I do not care what members opposite say: there is not 100 per cent agreement; there is a very small group of people who take a strong interest in the politics of this country. There are a lot of people who could not care less but who have to go along on a compulsory basis, be it at Federal or State elections. They are harassed by a large number of volunteers from all the political Parties shoving how to vote cards at them, speaking to them in various languages and doing all sorts of things to induce them to change their mind at the last minute.

Politicians worth their salt know that on polling day up to 7 per cent of the people change their mind, and anyone who is sitting on a majority of less than 7 per cent thinks very carefully, because nine times out of 10 nobody knows how they will poll until the end of the day. Compulsory voting is an imposition that has been forced on the people by the politicians of this country who are too damned lazy to go out and earn the respect of the people and to go out there and give the people a reason to vote. Let us be honest about the whole issue. The Liberal Party has bitten the bullet. The Liberal Party made the issue clear and has given it publicity in the media. I conducted surveys in my new electorate long before

polling day, and people were aware that the issue of voluntary voting would arise if the Liberal Party was successful.

As Don Dunstan used to stand up here and say time and again, we have a mandate and woe betide the other place if it refuses us that right. That is what it is all about. It is all about the will of the people, and the will of the people should prevail on this occasion. If anybody refuses the right of the people in relation to voluntary voting, they will be answerable again on another occasion. I must remind members that they have an obligation under a United Nations charter to ensure the rights and freedoms of the individual, the rights and freedoms of the people.

An honourable member: The freedom to exploit?

Mr BECKER: It has nothing to do with that. The trade unions are the only ones who know about that. That is their knuckle power as they practise it, and we know what happened in Victoria. We know what happened with the Builders Labourers Federation in Victoria; Premier Cain kicked them out and they came to South Australia, where they were welcomed with open arms with all the crook money they brought with them. What did they do with the Remm Corporation building? We know what the BLF did; we know how it behaved. It is still around the place ripping the guts out of this State and, if members want to know where the bulk of the State Bank's money went, they should ask the BLF.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections, and I suggest that the member for Peake address the matter before the Chair.

Mr BECKER: He is a lightweight in the union movement, so we really do not worry about him at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Peake should not make remarks in relation another member. He should concentrate on the matter before the House.

Mr BECKER: What annoys me is that those who say they believe in the rights and the freedoms of the individual will not give them those rights and freedoms in terms of voluntary voting.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will send the member for Ross Smith home early if he continues to defy Standing Orders.

Mr BECKER: I am very tempted to move that he be named, Mr Speaker. The conscription issue has nothing to do with it. One of the very first conscripts to be killed was the son of a friend of mine who lived in my electorate. So do not tell me that I do not know anything about that issue. Some of my staff in the bank were sent to Vietnam. At least I was proud enough to play my part in National Service in this country when it was compulsory. I was proud to do it and I learned a hell of a lot, which stood me in good stead when I joined the union movement and stood up for my rights. That is what I want the people of South Australia to do: stand up for their rights and insist on voluntary voting.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): Australia is only one of five democracies to have compulsory voting. We can talk about statistics and we can use them in various ways, but the reality is that only five countries have it. Many of the countries in question do not have the compulsion that we are talking about here. There has been a lot of misunderstanding about this.

Australia introduced compulsory voting at the Federal level in 1924, and South Australia introduced it in 1942—and it was the last State to do so. I will be very glad if it is the first State to abolish compulsory voting. So, it is very

appropriate that we again consider the issue. We took a long time to think about adopting compulsory voting, and it is time that we thought about getting rid of it. Queensland introduced compulsory voting in 1914, Victoria in 1926, New South Wales in 1930, Tasmania in 1928 and Western Australia in 1936.

Supporters of compulsory voting claim that there is a 90 per cent turnout so, in reality, 10 per cent do not vote. What are the costs in respect of that 10 per cent? Let us not forget that there are people who do not register; they are not counted in that 90 per cent. In fact, many young people—and as a high school teacher I have come across them—have said, 'Look, don't worry about registering and they will not bother you.' Is that the sort of attitude we want young people to have with respect to democracy?

In the 1990 Federal election, 500 000 Australians risked receiving a \$50 fine for not voting. We should also note that some people are exempt from voting on religious grounds and so on, so why cannot everyone be allowed to decide whether or not they should vote? Let them exercise their conscience; let them not look for loopholes or not register to vote. Following the 1989 State election, 34 262 'please explain' notices were posted to electors who did not vote; 9 288 expiation notices were issued; and 4 828 summonses were sent out to those who failed to provide an acceptable excuse or failed to pay the fine.

The cost to the State Electoral Department was \$121 614; however, only \$30 450 was recovered. That is the cost of chasing up people who do not really want to vote. From the way members opposite were carrying on, one would think that we were trying to take people's rights away from them. That is not the case. We want people to exercise their rights and to do so freely because, if that element of freedom does not exist, it is not a right. The word 'democracy' is derived from two Greek words *demos kratia*, an expression of people power as a matter of choice, and that should be the case.

I would like to refer to some statistics. We have heard a lot about the USA where 55.9 per cent voted at the 1992 presidential election, an increase of .5 per cent on 1988. Members opposite cited Italy as an example of compulsory voting. Italy does not have a compulsory voting system that is in any way like the system that exists in South Australia or Australia: there are no sanctions, fines or penalties; it is merely recorded that one has not voted. It is in a different category. In 1992 in that voluntary voting country 86.4 per cent of the people turned out to vote. Of course, the same thing happened in Great Britain. Australia is the only English speaking country which is in the Westminster system and which has compulsory voting.

If we look around us, we see that we have taken a lot from the British Parliament, and we should all be proud of that tradition, because it is the best system of government, the most successful form of democracy and the model for the rest of the world. However, when it suits us, we say that we support it, but many members opposite today ignored it because it did not suit them. We all say how great the Westminster system of government is and we talk about the traditions of the two Houses and so on, but we put aside the fact that there is still voluntary voting in the United Kingdom.

I believe that some members opposite are worried about the amount of support they will get if there is voluntary voting. They do not have to worry, because I and many members of both sides agree that, ultimately, compulsion will not affect the result. Members opposite are underestimating the intelligence of their support base. I am not because,

particularly in my electorate, I thank the many Labor supporters who exercised their right and voted for a Dean Brown Liberal Government. They changed their mind. We should not underestimate the intelligence of voters. People do not vote according to class. That is a suggestion that no longer holds. An article in the *IPA Review* states:

Commitment, not class. The argument that voluntary voting favours the conservative Parties is misleading. The key variable in determining whether people will choose to vote is commitment, not class. Some of the highest levels of voter turnout—

and listen to this—

in Britain occur in working class coalmining electorates.

People turn up not because they are of a particular social status, class or economic stratification but because they want to vote—to exercise their right.

I am sure that the member for Playford would agree with me that the way to get people to participate in democracy is through education. I was a teacher at Ingle Farm in the District of Playford, and I must admit that the member for Playford worked well for his constituents and did his best to educate the young about citizenship and the responsibilities of democracy. I have often come into this House with students to explain to them the importance of democracy and that it is an honour and a privilege to be in a democracy like Australia. The answer is to make people realise how important it is to exercise that right, not to force it upon them.

I congratulate the Education Department and acknowledge that in the past 10 years it was under a Labor Government. Let us not forget that. Progress was made in education, and I refer to courses on citizenship and responsibilities, the work that is being done with student representative councils in the schools, the new Australian studies courses, and SACE in years 11 and 12. They are the things that we should concentrate on. They will make young people more willing to participate and contribute in their society, ultimately enriching our democracy. If anything, we should have compulsory education about citizenship, not compulsory voting. In that way we will encourage people to value what many people take for granted. There are only a few countries in the world that have a democracy such as ours. Many countries do not have these privileges or rights. It is misleading to cite some of the countries to which members have referred in regard to compulsory voting. We have to talk about the Westminster system of government, democracies such as the United States, Western Europe, India and the many countries that have the democratic tradition.

Education is the answer. As you compulsorily educate people to appreciate what they have, voters not only will vote but they will vote according to knowledge. Democracy is in danger unless people know what they are voting for, the issues involved and the effects on them as individuals, on their families, on their communities and, ultimately, on the world. Unless you do that, arguments become irrelevant. I support the Bill, because it is an important step in giving responsibility back to people to exercise their rights.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Premier): From the outset can I say that the quality of argument put forward by the Opposition on this important piece of legislation has been disappointing, to say the least. We have sat here and listened to the arguments and we have heard the greatest mishmash that anyone could have put forward. The one thing that has been missing from anything that the Labor Party has put up on this important piece of legislation has been a principle.

What members opposite just cannot come to grips with is that one of the fundamental elements of any democracy should be a freedom to do something or not to do something. One of those fundamental freedoms is whether or not you should have to vote.

All we are trying to do in our democracy in South Australia, 100 years after we gave women the right to vote and to stand for Parliament, is to be a leading State within Australia by giving people the choice whether or not they have to vote.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ross Smith is warned for the second time.

An honourable member: The freedom to vote.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Yes, that is what this is about: the freedom to vote and the freedom to enjoy a fundamental principle of any democracy. Opposition members had so little faith in their own argument that every one of them used a different argument. They jumped from one point to another. Some thought that this was going to benefit the Liberal Party and others thought it was being introduced because we were wealthy and had more money than the Labor Party. As everyone knows, that is just not true. The Labor Party is the wealthy political Party of Australia. It gets its money from the trade union movement through compulsory union membership. They want compulsory union membership and compulsory voting. If they had half a chance, they would have compulsory voting with a subscription to the Labor Party for voting.

This is a fundamental platform that I put down in our policy speech immediately prior to the election. It was there for everyone to see. It was there as a fundamental part of our election program, and we have a mandate for it. If anyone wants evidence of that mandate, just count the numbers on this side of the House, plus those on the cross benches, compared to the numbers who sit opposite.

Mr Atkinson: That is a majority, not a mandate.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: What is a mandate if it is not a fundamental part of the policy that one puts forward at the election and is elected upon? Is the honourable member suggesting that anything we said at the election is irrelevant and I can go out and break any election promise I made? That is the sort of argument that Opposition members are now bringing forward: that what one says before an election is irrelevant. Based on the argument being put forward by the Labor Party, as the Opposition, it is giving us a licence, one could say, for going out and breaking election promises. I have no intention of doing so, but that is the sort of illogical argument that has been brought up by Opposition members during the debate.

The important thing to highlight is that not one of them was prepared to deal with the fundamental issue of what democracy is all about and the democratic principles on which our Westminster system was founded. We pride ourselves on having a Westminster Parliament. Yet look at the parent under which that Westminster system was established in the United Kingdom, where there is voluntary voting; look at the vast majority of other Westminster systems of government where there is voluntary voting; and look at virtually almost every other democratic country in the world where there is voluntary voting. Even Eastern Europe, the most recent entrant to the world of democracy and giving people the right to vote, has given people the choice to decide whether or not to vote. But that is not for the Labor Party in South Australia: it cannot tolerate such democratic principles.

Let us look at some of the strong arguments in favour of voluntary voting. First, people should have the choice. Secondly, compulsion does not mean that there will be an intelligent vote. In fact, one could argue that forcing people who do not wish to register a vote does not lead to good government. I think the most powerful argument of all is that, by giving voluntary voting, we are compelling every member of Parliament, even those in safe seats, to get out and work their electorates. I cannot think of a better reason for introducing it. It is a far more fundamental reason and a benefit to the entire community. Imagine where there is not one safe seat within the State. If the member of Parliament does not get out and work for the people, he will not entice them to vote for him and he will not be assured of winning that seat.

I wonder whether that is the real reason why Opposition members are not prepared to support this measure. It is well known that, by tradition, many of their backbenchers have been incredibly lazy when it comes to getting out and working their electorate. So, it would appear that they are prepared to cling onto their seats, and even their safe seats, on the basis of compelling people to go and vote for them.

I urge all members to support this measure. The Government has a mandate, and it will be interesting to see whether this small rump of members who class themselves as an Opposition, even at this stage, are prepared to acknowledge that the people of South Australia spoke very clearly and decisively on 11 December.

The House divided on the second reading:

AYES (31)

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Allison, H. | Andrew, K. A. |
| Armitage, M. H. | Ashenden, E. S. |
| Baker, S. J. | Bass, R. P. |
| Becker, H. | Brindal, M. K. |
| Brown, D. C.(teller) | Buckby, M. R. |
| Caudell, C. J. | Condous, S. G. |
| Cummins, J. G. | Evans, I. F. |
| Greig, J. M. | Hall, J. L. |
| Ingerson, G. A. | Kerin, R. G. |
| Leggett, S. R. | Lewis, I. P. |
| Matthew, W. A. | Meier, E. J. |
| Penfold, E. M. | Rosenberg, L. F. |
| Rossi, J. P. | Scalzi, G. |
| Such, R. B. | Tiernan, P. J. |
| Venning, I. H. | Wade, D. E. |
| Wotton, D. C. | |

NOES (9)

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Arnold, L. M. F. | Atkinson, M. J.(teller) |
| Blevins, F. T. | Clarke, R. D. |
| De Laine, M. R. | Foley, K. O. |
| Hurley, A. K. | Quirke, J. A. |
| Rann, M. D. | |

Majority of 22 for the Ayes.

Second reading thus carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.43 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday 10 March at 10.30 a.m.