LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 5, 1969

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

PETROL PRICES

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: Considerable unease is being felt in some quarters on the question of prices of petrol and oils in this State. Can the Chief Secretary, representing the Treasurer, tell the Council whether the Government is taking any steps or measures to investigate these prices?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I will seek a reply from the Treasurer and bring it down for the honourable member.

TOURISM

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture representing the Minister of Immigration and Tourism.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In yesterday's press there was a report that following his return from overseas the Minister of Immigration and Tourism (Hon. D. N. Brookman) would appeal to Cabinet for more money for tourism. Can the Minister say whether, in the event of Cabinet deciding that there is a need for more money for tourism, it is intended that this money will be spent on caravan parks and the like in country areas, or whether it is intended that it will be spent in the metropolitan area for the purpose of attracting tourists?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The Minister recently returned from a very short trip to Thailand, where he attended a conference, and I believe that what he saw there was of great benefit to him. He has briefly discussed his trip with Cabinet. When a decision has been made on this matter I shall supply the honourable member with a full reply.

ARTERIOSCLEROSIS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I have received some communications from constituents in my district with reference to sufferers from arteriosclerosis. I have been informed that the Arteriosclerosis and Vascular Diseases Sufferers Association was formed in 1967, one of its aims being to obtain information on modern methods of treatment of arteriosclerosis and vascular diseases and to make such information available to members. The people went on to inquire about the treatment available at the Kassel clinics of Dr. Moler in West Germany and the possibility of people being able to get this treatment or similar treatment in South Australia or being assisted to go to West Germany for it. Can the Minister of Health say whether he has any information on this matter?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: A statement has been made available to the Australian Medical Association following a trial of Dr. Moler's treatment conducted at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The statement explains that the Royal Adelaide Hospital does offer a comprehensive peripheral vascular service, including intra-arterial oxygen therapy, for selected patients. Controlled trials using Dr. Moler's machine were recently conducted at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, but Dr. Moler's claims have not been reproduced. However, further investigations are being made. There is much statistical evidence about the trials conducted at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and, if the honourable member would like to see the results of those trials and the statistics relating to them, I can make them available to him.

ROAD MARKINGS

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: I desire leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Roads and Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: In yesterday evening's *News* there appeared what might be termed a query letter with regard to the lining of some of our highway pavings. There is, of course, the legal requirement, and I have no quarrel with that, but I have anticipated that this may be brought up by some member of the public. Therefore, I think it should be pointed out that in many cases our highways, particularly adjacent to traffic lights, are being divided into three or four lanes, yet the moment the intersection is used there is no lining on the road and on many occasions a vehicle on the near side, and obviously a faster vehicle, proceeds across an intersection at a greater speed than a truck that has to change gear several times. Obviously, if the faster vehicle on the near side proceeds across the crossing, it is committing an offence, if it overtakes on the near side of another vehicle. Can the Minister say whether he will

take up the matter of more lines being marked on the highways in the city to form lanes for vehicles as they leave traffic lights, and for some distance beyond them?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Yes. I will take up this matter of the possibility of lining the roads.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: We need fewer lines, not more lines, and we will get on better.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: No. This matter needs to be looked into. I shall get a report on it.

MANUFACTURED MEAT

The Hon. L. R. HART: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. R. HART: Most primary producers, particularly those engaged in the production of meat, have been rather concerned at statements recently made about patents being taken out in Australia for the manufacture of synthetic meat. Although at this stage it is not being produced on a commercial scale, there is a fear that this may eventually happen. The Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry is aware of the situation and I believe a request has been made to him to call a special meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council to discuss this very problem. However, to my knowledge this has not been done so far. Will the Minister therefore consider this question with a view to having it introduced at the next Australian Agricultural Council meeting, particularly as there is a need to have uniform legislation introduced in this country to deal with this problem?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I will take the matter up and get the honourable member a report.

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: I seek leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: In the *Advertiser* of Monday, August 12, 1968, the Premier is reported as having said, when referring to the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study plan:

It must be remembered that this report has not at this stage been accepted by the Government . . .

He went on to say:

We now propose that the report be subjected to critical review by all sectors of the community for the next six months.

On the following day he was reported as having said:

The public will have six months to consider and make representations on the proposals before any action is taken.

In common with all other members, I am deeply concerned (and I use the word "concerned" deliberately) and, secondly, I was disturbed to read in this morning's paper a statement by Mr. A. G. Flint, the Chief Executive Engineer of the Highways and Local Government Department, who is reported as having said last night:

I have never heard so much tripe spoken about anything as about the M.A.T.S. plan.

He went on to say:

We are confronted with crackpots who want to stop the urban spread and say "Don't build freeways, they cause over-crowding and are a failure".

These instant experts, like one who visited 30 countries in seven months and supplied the answer, offer alternatives based on fanciful opinions.

It is clear that in that last remark Mr. Flint was referring to a man who, in my opinion, wrote an excellent letter that was published in the previous day's paper and who addressed a public meeting last night and who, in my opinion, made valuable suggestions. I cannot see how these two statements line up together: first, that the Government will listen to public opinion and, secondly, when an intelligent (as I think it was) public statement is made by someone who has studied the matter, the man concerned is slandered by the department. Can the Minister therefore say whether he will countenance this type of attack and whether the sort of statement that was made last night is Government policy? Also, will the Government let traffic engineers ride roughshod over all other sections of the community and all other considerations, whether they be practical, aesthetic or humanitarian considerations?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Mr. Flint saw me this morning about the reported statements at last night's meeting. In some respects he was reported incorrectly, and I am sorry that that has happened. It does not usually happen with the newspaper concerned.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: That is today's funny story.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: However, on this occasion it has happened, and it is most unfortunate. I take the opportunity of complimenting the public servants from the M.A.T.S. organization. They willingly agreed

to attend public meetings during this six-month period and to submit to these meetings factual information about the M.A.T.S. Report so that those who attended such meetings could, after such attendance, properly base their judgments. These public servants have unfortunately come under a great deal of pressure at these public meetings, yet they have stuck to their task exceptionally well, and I commend them for that.

Last night's meeting was held in the Marion district, where there has been strong criticism of the M.A.T.S. Report. I understand that there was considerable interjection at the meeting and that, in the general atmosphere created as a result of this tension and as a result of the interjections made (which should not have been made at that moment), Mr. Flint did make some heated comments. If he has made any offending comments, I know that he apologizes for them. Specifically, I understand that the statement in the article, being criticism of a particular man, was not made last night: I understand he was not criticizing the gentleman to whom the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill has referred.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: He was criticizing all objectors.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: He was being perfectly frank, and the atmosphere created at the meeting was such that he made some statements that he would not normally have made and which he had not made in the past. He is a very dedicated officer for whom I and his superior officers have a very high regard. He has borne the brunt of the pressure because he has been the most senior officer attending these meetings. He preferred to attend all the difficult and big meetings that were arranged rather than ask other officers to do so. So, in reply, I make the point that it is very unfortunate that the report appeared as it did, because it was not wholly correct.

The honourable member asked whether we were selling out, so to speak, to the traffic engineers on this question of the consideration of the M.A.T.S. Report. That is not so.

Naturally, we were guided by experts; in this world today a person is a fool if he does not respect the opinion of experts and does not take it into very serious consideration before arriving at a final decision on any particular issue. It was not only traffic engineers who were interested in this particular transportation study, the cost of which to the State has been about $700,000: the senior officers of all transportation departments together with the Town Clerk of the Adelaide City Council formed this committee. They, in turn, retained world-famous experts to carry out the study. Many people believe that they were all American experts, but that is not so. Originally, the architects of the whole scheme laid it down that at least one firm had to be an Australian firm, and the firm of Rankine and Hill, of Sydney, was chosen. The Government is not blindly taking the advice of the Highways Department or of traffic engineers in this regard: it is weighing up the report and all the submissions from individuals, organizations, and from local government bodies in regard to the report.

As evidence of our good faith in wanting to consider all submissions (as I said in this morning's newspaper), we are not binding ourselves to the previous arrangement that we will come to a decision on February 12. That original undertaking was given on the basis that submissions would be made to us before that date, but some parties have indicated they are unable to present their submissions as early as they had hoped; therefore, we need a few more days in which to make a final decision, and we expect to make that decision early in the week following February 12.

Returning to the point that I think is very important: I defend the officer involved whose name has been mentioned here today. He is a dedicated officer with a great future in the Public Service. He has been, in some respects, incorrectly reported, and I trust that no further reflection will be made on him as a result of any points upon which he has not been reported correctly.

The Hon. SIR ARTHUR RYMILL: Following that reply, I would like to ask the Minister a further question. However, before doing so I think that the honourable members of this Council will know I am not reflecting on this officer's ability whatsoever; we all know he is a very capable man. I do not know why the Minister should ask that there be no further reflection made on him: I was merely asking that the officer concerned should not be permitted to reflect on other people, and I was not saying that he is being reflected upon.

My question is: is this Council to be given the opportunity of debating the M.A.T.S. plan, or is the Government proposing to make a final decision without reference to Parliament? If the latter is the case, and that is the Government's intention, then I propose to examine Standing Orders to see how I can promote a debate in this Council on this matter of transcendent importance to all people of South Australia.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The matter is not going to be referred to Parliament for any final decision. The transportation study is a transportation plan; it is a service plan. I do not know whether the honourable member confuses it (as some other people have been confusing it) with a town or a development plan. There is very little difference between a master plan for transportation in metropolitan Adelaide and a master plan over the next, say, 20 years for other services such as electricity, water reticulation, sewerage, education, or any other service that Governments provide for the people. It is simply a service plan. I do not know of any examples where other service plans are brought to Parliament for approval; that is, any master plans dealing with services.

It is, in effect, an alteration of an existing transportation plan. There is a transportation plan now, within the plan that is on the Statute Book (the 1962 development plan for Adelaide), proclaimed in the planning and development legislation of 1966 and 1967. This plan of ours now is an amendment of that transportation plan.

I am very pleased to say that whereas the existing lawful plan shows 97 miles of freeway, this what can be called an amended plan reduces that freeway length to 60.8 miles. Therefore, reasoning along these lines I see no reason why this matter has to be referred to Parliament. If every department had to start bringing down to Parliament its forward planning for future services for metropolitan Adelaide, where would we get? I fail to see, therefore, the justification for it.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: I should like to ask the Minister where we would get if every plan for the expenditure of $500,000,000 or $600,000,000 was not referred to Parliament.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The honourable member now is basing his argument on the fact that purely because the plan costs a certain amount of money it should come to Parliament.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: No, I am not, actually: I am basing it on the fact that it looks to me like the massacre of the metropolis, and I think we are entitled to debate it.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The honourable member has changed his ground now from cost and is talking about the massacre of the metropolis.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Both.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Now he says it is both.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: I do not think it is a matter for Government decision: I think it is a matter for Parliament.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: We all know that a large amount of money is involved. We also know that the costs of roadway services and public transport development in every metropolitan area are immense. In all the modern cities of the world the costs of servicing under the general umbrella of transportation are very high, for roadways are high in cost wherever they are built. I expect, for example, that in the next 20 years we in this State will be spending double this sum envisaged on roadways in this M.A.T.S. report on country road developments in South Australia.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: It will be interesting to know where that money will come from.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: It is interesting from any point of view. Therefore, I do not agree that simply because a plan costs a very large sum of money it should come back to Parliament on that basis alone. The second point was that the metropolitan area was going to be massacred; I presume the honourable member means by freeways more so than by any form of railway development. We have cut down from 97 to 60.8 miles of freeway. Let us compare ourselves with other cities. For instance, Melbourne will soon be announcing a plan for transportation costing, incidentally, $2,000,000,000 and embracing about 300 miles of freeway. I have been told that Perth has already acquired 300 miles of freeway space in the metropolitan area. We are to have 60.8 miles.

Apart from the question of length, I ask the honourable member to imagine just what kind of freeway pattern is proposed. In general terms, in the metropolitan area it is simply two north-south freeways through metropolitan Adelaide, one being on the eastern side of the city proper and the other being on the western side. I know there are some variations to that, but in general terms that is the pattern. People from the north of this metropolitan area eventually will want to get to the south. Are we going to put them over the hills or out to sea? They must go through metropolitan Adelaide.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: What about the big interchanges down on the Port Road?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I point out to the Minister that this is a reply to a question and not a debate. I think the Minister must

confine himself to answering the questions rather than debating the merits of the M.A.T.S. plan.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I respectfully defer to your ruling, Mr. President. I repeat that the Government is fully aware of its responsibilities in this whole matter, and it does not intend at the present moment to refer this matter back to Parliament.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: Like Sir Arthur Rymill, I am very concerned about the M.A.T.S. plan. In recent days we seem to be getting reports from experts and are supposed to believe what the experts say. However, I point out that if we had listened to the reports of experts we would never have had the Leigh Creek coalfield. I have tried to read all that has been published with regard to the M.A.T.S. plan. I read in particular the lengthy report that was made by the Adult Education Department of the University of Adelaide, at considerable expense, I think.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am afraid the honourable member is expressing opinions rather than asking a question.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: I will ask my question, Mr. President. It seems to me that there is a wealth of material that must be considered and that no Government could be expected to determine what its views or its answer will be on this matter between now and February 12, only seven days away. The subject is so wide and vast that it would be impossible to do it in that time. Will the Government make sure that it takes adequate time to consider all the ramifications of this matter before a final and irrevocable announcement is made?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Yes. However, I hasten to point out that we have already been considering the many issues of the M.A.T.S. plan. I have had a great number of conferences on it and I have had many reports on it and have spent a great deal of time in considering the many questions relating to it, especially during the last two months. Cabinet has held meetings specifically to consider the matter. We have sat until the late hours of the night with our officers discussing the matter and dealing with it, and without our officers, too. I hope the honourable member has not been under the impression that we have not been doing anything up till now and are suddenly doing it: we have been looking at the question for some months now, and we want to reach a decision. Not to do so soon is unfair on the many people whose homes, it would appear at this moment, are affected and whose factories are affected, because they do not know where they stand. Therefore, we cannot delay the matter for too long. We are giving it every possible consideration and, as I said, we hope to make a final decision early in the week following February 12.

DOGS

The Hon. L. R. HART: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. R. HART: During last October this Council passed certain amendments to the Registration of Dogs Act. One of those amendments was the repeal of section 36, which provided for Aborigines to have up to two dogs without having to register them. Can the Minister of Local Government ascertain whether all dogs held by Aborigines at this stage have been registered?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I would not like the job.

FOOT-ROT

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: People in the South-East during the past year or two have been most satisfied with the almost total eradication of foot-rot in that area, due to the keen application and ability of the officers of the Agriculture Department, in particular Dr. Smith. I believe, however, that he is now in Adelaide. It has been reported that one or two more outbreaks of foot-rot have occurred in the South-East because of sheep being imported from another State. Will the Minister give his officers every opportunity to follow up this matter so as to contain the problem forthwith, as has been done in the past?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I thank the honourable member for his complimentary remarks, which will be passed on to Dr. Smith. He and Mr. Marshall Irving have played a great part in this eradication. We were able to say that the disease had been eradicated. However, recently there have been some importations across the border, which have brought about a few isolated outbreaks of foot-rot. These were immediately clamped down on. The department is constantly in touch with the

situation. I think we can say, too, that co-operation by stock firms has been very good. I am glad to hear the honourable member mention the work done by the officers of my department. It will certainly give them every encouragement to see that this scourge is kept out of the State.

WILLS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Wills Act, 1936-1966. Read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from December 11, 1968. Page 3169.)

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): This Bill was introduced in another place by the Leader of the Opposition. It seeks to bring in full adult franchise (whatever that may mean) for this Council. I say at the outset that I cannot in any circumstances support this Bill as it stands. It is directed against the present franchise of the Legislative Council and is intended to make the franchise for this place identical with that of the House of Assembly.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: What is wrong with that?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: This I do not support. I believe that an identical or a duplicated franchise for the two Houses would tend to make this Council a rubber stamp for the House of Assembly. I do not believe this is the purpose of a bicameral system: in fact, I am certain it is not the purpose of a two-House system and it is not the way in which Upper Houses work beneficially for the State in this bicameral set-up. In fact, it would be harmful to the State if this should occur.

Having said this, I also say that I believe, and my Party believes, in a wide and balanced franchise for the Legislative Council, but certainly not in an identical franchise. I ask the question that the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill asked two months ago: what is wrong with the Legislative Council at present? I believe the Legislative Council has done a great job for South Australia over many years. It looks at legislation objectively and passes the great majority of Bills introduced by whichever Party is in power. I believe the Legislative Council has improved many Bills by amendment. Therefore, I agree with other honourable members that this Council carries out its functions very well, and that it has done so for over 100 years. It has been of great assistance to the State and has used what I would term a balanced and objective judgment and viewpoint in having a second look at the great majority of South Australia's legislation. I also pose the question: what is wrong with the present Legislative Council franchise? At present in many respects it is wider than the local government franchise, and I have never heard anybody complain about that franchise. In fact, I have heard the local government set-up praised by both sides of politics on many occasions for being close to the people.

My friends opposite who represent the Australian Labor Party have talked on many occasions (I am sure, sincerely, according to their view) of this Council as though it was a House of privilege, as though the franchise restrictions, such as they are, were dreadfully restrictive. It has been called by Labor Party propaganda a property owners' House. Anyone would think, with all due respect to their opinions, that only the wealthy had a vote for this Council and had a say in what went on here. With all due respect to my friends, I think this is a gross exaggeration of the present position. The franchise has been progressively widened over the years by the diminishing value of money. We all know that this so-called property owners' requirement is the grand sum of $100 and that there are several other qualifications, such as being an inhabitant-occupier, which mean that the franchise can be quite wide even as it is now. It is not a matter of wealth, as we have heard intimated from time to time.

I have said that I cannot support this Bill as it stands, though there may be one or two things of limited or questionable value within it to which I shall come when I deal with the various clauses. I have also said that the Liberal and Country League believes in a wide but not identical franchise for this Council. I have already explained what all honourable members, I am sure, already know—that the present franchise is not the dreadful, restricted-to-the-wealthy, type of franchise that some of my friends opposite would have the public believe. In fact, it is quite a wide franchise now if people will only take advantage of it—and, goodness knows, the Leader of the Opposition in another place did his best at the public's expense to make people do that. But we in the Liberal and Country Party believe in and are prepared to implement a franchise that gives both parents, in every separate home or flat in South Australia, a vote for the

Legislative Council if they so desire, and under this franchise in the Bill introduced earlier this session by the Hon. Mr. Rowe no-one would be excluded once he had taken one step towards responsibility. Once the younger people of 21 to 23 years have got away from their mothers' apron strings, as it were, and secured for themselves not a wealthy man's home but merely a self-contained flat under rental, not necessary owning their own house, they could enrol for the Legislative Council if they so desired. To my mind this is a most desirable franchise. It is not identical and, as I have said, this is most important and most desirable if the two Houses of Parliament are not to mirror one another.

The Hon. L. R. Hart: Why do many people not take advantage of the right to enrol?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: In my opinion many do not take advantage of it because they are not interested in politics. Indeed, many people vote for the Lower House merely to avoid paying a fine for not voting. If people want to take an interest in politics, they have the opportunity to do so. However, many people do not bother to take an intelligent interest in political life.

The Hon. L. R. Hart: Many of these could be irresponsible people.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: They could be, and many people who vote for either my Party or that of my friends opposite do not think sufficiently about it, either. The franchise suggested in the Hon. Mr. Rowe's Bill is wide and desirable, and no person need be excluded if he or she is prepared to take the trouble today of performing two positive and simple acts: first, to enrol, and, secondly, if he or she is still living at home, to become independent of the home and so become entitled to enrol. It has been said that, if everyone enrolled under this scheme, 85 per cent of the people enrolled for the House of Assembly would be enrolled for the Legislative Council. However, everyone would not enrol, for the reason my colleague, the Hon. Mr. Hart, implied just now: because everyone is not inclined to take an intelligent interest in politics. In my opinion, the enrolment under the franchise about which I am talking might be about 70 or 75 per cent rather than 85 per cent of the House of Assembly enrolment.

It has been asked why, if 85 per cent (or 70 per cent, if it happens to be that) enrol, the remaining 15 or 30 per cent, as the case may be, should not be enrolled. When the people wish to take the trouble, first of enrolling as a Legislative Council elector or, secondly, of becoming independent in order to qualify for enrolment, they can enrol. It is up to them. Surely, if we must have the donkey vote and people who vote merely to avoid a fine influencing the result of House of Assembly elections (I think even my friends opposite would agree that that is undesirable), it is reasonable and proper that this Council be elected by people who, whether they be Liberal or Labor, take an intelligent interest in politics and are prepared to do something positive about it: that is, to take active steps to enrol or become independent of their home ties so that they will be entitled to enrol. That is the franchise I support for this Council; it is wide, and it will give adequate representation to every house in this State. It is a franchise which, nevertheless, is not identical with that of the House of Assembly, and it is to be commended for that reason.

On the other hand, my friends of the Australian Labor Party want an identical franchise. I think they would be the first to admit that they really do not want that so that this Council will continue indefinitely: I believe it is their first step towards its abolition. The members of the A.L.P. want what they call a full adult franchise. What does that mean? At present it means all persons over the age of 21 years. Tomorrow, so to speak, if the A.L.P. has its way, it will mean all persons over the age of 18 years. Possibly later, when further pressure is exerted, it may mean, as the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill has said, all persons over the age of 17 or 16 years.

I oppose most strenuously the tendency to widen the franchise to the stage of irresponsibility. Much nonsense (and I do not say that provocatively, because it is not sense) has been talked about 18-year-old people being more mature today than were people of this age years ago. I may have said this before, and I make no apology for saying it again: they may be more highly educated in the formal theoretical sense (and in many cases this is so), but the way in which some university students carry on, at the drop of a hat, when they are still being supported by their parents and when they are, in very many instances, being greatly assisted by very generous (in this instance) Commonwealth Government support, gives the lie to their so-called greater maturity, as well as highlighting their lack of common sense.

Although it may be true that 30 years ago many young people had to leave school three or four years before reaching 18 years, in many cases they had to continue their education at night school after work. Indeed, in

many cases they continued their education until adult life, and they knew what it was like to work, to keep themselves (at least partially) and to develop a sense of responsibility. At 18 years of age these people became, in my view, more mature and responsible than many 18-year-olds are today. I believe it is largely nonsense to say that 18-year-olds are more mature today than were the 18-year-olds of years gone by. It is false to use that as an argument for extending the full adult franchise to them. Therefore, as this is in the back of the minds of many people who have perhaps not thought it out clearly, I oppose the Bill because it intends to grant full adult franchise to persons over 21 years to vote for this Council today, and this will mean granting full adult franchise for 18-year-olds to vote for this Council in a reasonably short period.

My friends of the Australian Labor Party want this Council abolished. Indeed, they have said so on many occasions. I realize they are sincere. Those members know their ideas and know what they think is best for this country, and I respect their opinions, as much as I disagree with them. They have said many times that they want the Legislative Council abolished. If we carry this to its logical conclusion, they also want the State Parliaments abolished and eventually to centralize all power in Canberra in one House. They do not want that at present, because the position in the Senate at the moment happens to suit them. However, it is the eventual aim of the Labor Party to have unification in one House in Canberra. Let us imagine for a moment taking deputations of South Australians (who are used to being able to see their Ministers here readily, they being perhaps only 50 or 100 miles from their homes) all the way to Canberra every time they want to see a Minister. Imagine the remoteness of this from local affairs!

Let us look at situations where what the Australian Labor Party wants now obtains. Fortunately, most English-speaking countries and States have Governments which are modelled on the bicameral system and which, for the most part, work very satisfactorily. Other honourable members have referred to unicameral systems, which the A.L.P. wants, which either obtain or have obtained in various oversea countries and which have led to dictatorship or near-dictatorship and, in many cases, to a one-Party system in which people are afraid to belong to any but the approved Party. I would hate to think that the A.L.P. would want that—and I am quite sure that my friends do not really want that state of affairs to be reached—but this is what a unicameral Parliament can lead to.

We have only to look at some of the former British colonies that have been granted independence on a unicameral system to see evidence of this—a situation of one Party, one House and one man who is virtually a dictator, even though he may go to the United Kingdom to a Commonwealth Conference as Premier of the country. We have only to look at Queensland to see evidence of the beginnings of this, but in that State there was an A.L.P. split 12 or 13 years ago. In Queensland the Legislative Council was abolished by the A.L.P., despite the people's wishes; I think about 70 per cent were in favour of retaining the Legislative Council at the referendum.

The Labor Party in Queensland so entrenched itself in office that, but for the split, there would have been no possible future for any young man with ambitions to office in State politics other than in the A.L.P. If this was so, surely some young men would have said, "What is the good of my belonging to the Liberal Party or the Country Party? I will join the A.L.P." So, here we had the beginnings, probably not intended, of a one-Party dictatorship.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Your Party has not attempted to change it back.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Sometimes it is a little difficult to unscramble the egg. I am not prepared to go into the reasons why the Legislative Council has not been re-established in Queensland, but I believe that it would probably be wise to re-establish it. The eventual aim of this Bill, as I said previously, is a one-House system, with all the implications that I have referred to and to which I am implacably opposed.

The Hon. L. R. Hart: It would mean a dictatorship.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Eventually it would. I turn now to the Bill itself. Clauses 1 and 2 are merely formal. Clause 3 seeks to enact new section 10a, which provides that the Legislative Council shall not be abolished and that its powers shall not be altered. This may—and I stress "may"—have some value, and I am not opposed to the clause as it stands, but I very much doubt the ability of a sovereign Parliament to bind a succeeding sovereign Parliament.

I have read the history of the procedure in New South Wales in the late 1920's and I am aware that Mr. Jack Lang, the then Labor Premier, tried to do the very things that would

have to be done to get rid of such a section as this one and to abolish the Council. I am also aware that he was blocked by only a 3-2 majority of the Full Court. I believe, too, that this decision of the Full Court has subsequently been strongly criticized by eminent legal men, and I believe that it would be by no means impossible, should a succeeding Labor Government here try to emulate Mr. Lang, for the verdict to go 3-2 in the other direction. So, I look at clause 3 with considerable suspicion. As I have said, the clause may have some value and I am not opposing it, because it may provide some safeguard for this Council, although I do not set much store upon it.

Clause 4 repeals section 20 of the principal Act and replaces it with provisions for full adult franchise. To this clause, and to clause 5 (which repeals sections 20a, 21 and 22 of the principal Act), honourable members must by now have no doubt that I am completely opposed. Clause 6 is a "rats and mice" clause: I say this with due respect to ministers of religion. I do not identify clergymen with rats and mice. The purpose of the clause is to enable clergymen as such to stand for Parliament and to remain clergymen. It amends section 44 of the principal Act, which provides:

No Judge of any court of the State, and no clergyman or officiating minister shall be capable of being elected a member of the Parliament.

This clause strikes out "and no clergyman or officiating minister". It means that clergymen and officiating ministers are no longer debarred, whilst they remain in their professions, from becoming members of Parliament. Personally, although I am not strongly opposed to this provision, I question the wisdom of clergymen identifying themselves openly with politics. If a clergyman is an active member of his profession, he will have no time to be a member of Parliament.

A schoolteacher must give up his job if he wants to be a member of Parliament and, if he is a teacher in a Government school, he must resign even before he becomes a candidate. So, I see little merit in this clause. If a clergyman wants to remain a minister of religion, by all means let him remain such. If he wants to be a politician, let him give up his office and become a politician.

In conclusion, I can see very little merit in this Bill. The first two clauses are formal. Clauses 3 enacts a so-called safeguard on which I cannot set very much store. I am completely opposed to clauses 4 and 5 because they will tend to make this Council a mirror of the other House and possibly facilitate the Council's eventual abolition. Clause 6 is of very doubtful importance. Therefore, at this stage I oppose the Bill.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 4. Page 3339.)

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I support this long Bill. The principal Act is very complex and is being reviewed by a special committee so that it may be simplified where possible and brought up to date. It is rather unusual to have an amending Bill of such length in the present circumstances. Therefore, we must be very careful that, in amending the principal Act further, we do not complicate it to a greater extent. The Bill itself covers a number of provisions and is essentially a Committee Bill, but I should like to make one or two comments on it.

First, I commend the Hon. Mr. Bevan for his speech yesterday, which showed that he had put in a considerable amount of research on this subject. My first question relates to clause 4 which, with clause 3, allows a district council to elect a mayor instead of a chairman. In principle, I agree with the intention of the clause to allow for an independent chairman in a district council as well as in a municipality. I believe it to be a tribute to the quality of men and women who have been attracted to local government and who are serving under the present district council system that allows for the election of a chairman from among its members. The system has worked well, but I believe that the principle of an independent chairman, not representing any particular section of a council, is a good one (that is, a member elected by all the ratepayers rather than by any one section of ratepayers). Therefore, I support the principle of allowing district councils as well as municipalities to elect a mayor as chairman of a council. However, I find the machinery set up to allow this somewhat confusing. It clearly sets out the manner in which a mayor shall be elected by saying:

. . . A mayor shall be elected for that declared council and for that purpose this Act shall apply and have effect as if—

(*a*) that declared council were a municipality;

(*b*) the election of such a mayor were an election of a mayor of a municipality; and

(c) any vacancy in the office of such a mayor where a vacancy in the office of a mayor of a municipality.

That is clear and, once the council has been declared a council for the purpose of that clause, the election of the mayor shall take place as if that council were a municipality. However, the clause stops there and does not make clear whether the mayor is a member of the council, whether he has a deliberative vote (the Hon. Mr. Bevan made that point yesterday), nor does it define his duties after he becomes an independently elected chairman, or whether those duties are those of the normal chairman whom he displaces or of a mayor as in a municipality. The clause merely sets out the method by which a mayor shall be elected.

A further important point is that the clause does not make clear how the initial move for such election should be made. Proposed new section 65a. (2) reads:

The Governor may by proclamation declare any district council to be a district council to which this section applies and may by proclamation revoke such a declaration.

However, there is no indication how this set of circumstances should commence. The clause does not make clear whether this shall be done on request from the council, by petition of ratepayers, or by a poll of ratepayers in the district: it merely sets out that "The Governor may by proclamation . . .".

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: Perhaps the council has to make the application.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: Perhaps, but the Bill does not say so. It does not say that it must come from the council, from ratepayers, or as a consequence of an amalgamation between councils. The proposed new section needs some explanation, and I believe that, although the principles of an independent chairman has my strong support, there should be some addition to the Local Government Act, particularly as it applies in proposed new subsection (5) of this section, which states:

If any doubt or difficulty arises in relation to any matter, situation or circumstance for which adequate provision is not made in this section the Governor may, for the purpose of giving full effect to the objects of this section, by proclamation resolve that doubt or difficulty and give directions for the purpose of removing the doubt . . . .

That is a wide provision because it gives Executive Council judicial power, and I believe that the machinery for electing a mayor as chairman of a district council should be clearly written into the Act. I bring these matters forward well knowing that I will have a further opportunity to discuss them in the Committee stage.

Clause 6 refers to appeals against dismissal by local government officers, and was referred to by the Hon. Mr. Bevan yesterday. Two questions arise here, the first being the word "referee", which has a wide meaning. It appears that in a matter of this description a person appointed should have some special qualifications. As the clause now stands, it appears to me that any officer who thinks he has been unjustly dismissed has two avenues of appeal: one to the appropriate industrial tribunal already provided for in the Act and the other to a referee appointed by the Minister. If an alternative is provided, I think the officer concerned should make a choice between one or the other instead of using both.

I would also refer to one or two matters in other clauses but I believe the Minister is aware of these questions. Some are merely drafting amendments and do not directly affect the principles of the Bill. Clause 7 amends section 172a of the principal Act and extends the franchise of persons eligible to vote in local government elections. I agree with the principle of including the spouse of a person eligible for a vote as being a person also entitled to vote. I think this is a principle that members of this Council support quite strongly. However, I consider that it does not go far enough, for as I read it clause 7, read in conjunction with section 172a, only extends this privilege to the spouse of an inhabitant-occupier. It specifically applies only to a dwellinghouse, for the section refers to "ratable property used only for the purposes of a dwellinghouse".

This means, if I read the section correctly, that if this house is on a rural property that is used for rural pursuits, or on a horticultural property, or even if it is a dwellinghouse attached to a retail business, the spouse does not qualify. I believe this clause needs amending so as to cover the spouses on other properties where they may live but where the ratable property is not used exclusively as a dwellinghouse, such as a farm-house.

The Hon. Mr. Bevan referred yesterday to clause 10 dealing with special reserve funds. I have for some time believed that there are some things for which councils could quite easily make financial provision over a period of time. However, on further reflection I believe there are some dangers involved in the very wide powers that this provision would give. I refer to certain projects for which a council may set up a fund and for which it

may be necessary to borrow money. At present when money has to be borrowed a poll of ratepayers can be demanded. I believe that this could be used in some circumstances to set up a fund beforehand for some particular project and thus circumvent this provision, which gives the ratepayers some say when a project is to be financed by way of borrowed money. Although perhaps this is not a big point, I bring it forward for the Minister's consideration.

Clause 12 introduces a new section relating to the powers of councils to grant approval for the laying of pipes, conduits, cables or wires under the surface of any public street for the purposes of conveying electricity. These powers already exist with the consent of the Minister, in relation to telephone lines and certain other things, and perhaps a simple amendment could have included electricity as well. That power is contained in section 365. However, that section requires the permission of the Minister, whereas under the proposed new section the power of decision is left with the council, subject to any regulations made by the Governor. Thus it so widens the provision as to give a council the power to grant such approval on its own initiative, provided that the undertaking complies with certain requirements. I presume that with electrical cables the requirements as to depth and covering and so on would be specified.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: This actually only means the wiring from the post to a person's fence at the present time. Although it has been doubted whether this is lawful, some people have applied to underground the electricity into their property.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I thank the Minister for his interjection. I can see that once regulations are drafted this provision would give councils more right of decision and perhaps would expedite approval for these things to be done.

The Bill contains a number of amendments with regard to postal voting, and one provision that I query concerns the matter of the witnessing of postal votes. The Bill extends the number of people who may lawfully act as a witness to a postal vote to such an extent that the provision is very wide indeed. However, it still does not cover a number of circumstances that could arise. A person making a postal vote must be 10 miles from the polling place or otherwise prevented by ill health or for some other reason from attending the polling place. I cannot see why an elector on the House of Assembly roll could not be included as a witness. This would bring in practically anyone over the age of 21 years. I notice that all that is required of a witness is that he or she sign his or her name and the date, so I cannot see why anyone enrolled on the State electoral roll would not be adequately qualified for this purpose.

I bring these few points to the notice of the Council. As I said earlier, this is essentially a Bill to be dealt with in Committee. It is rather longer than most of the Local Government Act Amendment Bills we have had recently, and as it covers a wide range of subjects I believe it should be given close scrutiny. I support the second reading.

The Hon. L. R. HART secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.40 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, February 6, at 2.15 p.m.