

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Tuesday, August 31, 1971

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

**QUESTIONS****FLOODING**

Dr. EASTICK: Can the Minister of Works say on whose authority large volumes of water were released last Sunday from the South Para and Mount Bold reservoirs? Also, will he say whether such action, which endangers the lives of persons living downstream, and which certainly adversely affects their livelihood, is to be reviewed? I speak more particularly of the release of water from the South Para River, which flows through the district of Light and through Gawler itself as well as through part of the district of the member for Elizabeth and, further downstream, through the district of the member for Goyder. The district of the member for Mawson is affected by the release of water from the Mount Bold reservoir. I acknowledge that the flow of water from the Kangaroo Creek reservoir involves an entirely different set of circumstances, because in that case there is a spillway and not a series of gates to be opened. However, there seems to have been no official warning of the release of the volumes of water to which I have referred. Certainly, the police were not informed; nor could police officers inform the people concerned that their properties might be affected. This is contrary to the situation that existed when water was released from the South Para reservoir in 1963. At 11.30 last evening, the police patrol from Gawler was seeking the assistance of the Gawler corporation to provide barriers in order to prevent people from going near the river which was again rising as a result of the opening of one and a half gates at the South Para reservoir. Fortunately, members of the police patrol, having observed the rising water, were able to seek such help. In many areas, there has been much damage to private property, including houses, and more than 3ft. of water has been running through some houses. Although I appreciate that certain circumstances arise as a result of acts of God, I point out that in this case it is suggested that a man-made flood has caused the damage.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I have had the storm flooding that occurred on Sunday investigated by the Engineering and Water Supply Department, and I have obtained from

the Director and Engineer-in-Chief a report that will partly answer the honourable member's question. The honourable member suggested that this was a man-made flood. My information is that the dam did not contribute to the flooding but that, in fact, if anything it assisted to control it. However, as I am not an engineer I do not want to pursue that point or to argue with the honourable member, who is not an engineer either, about it. I guess this is a matter for people who are qualified to talk about it. The Engineer-in-Chief has supplied me with the following report:

Flooding in the Gawler River was due to the combined flows of water coming from the North Para River, which is uncontrolled, and the South Para River, on which the department has a major storage. On Saturday night, there was a capacity for some 500,000,000 gall. in the reservoir and there was no indication of very large flows arriving. It might be noted that the rainfall at both South Para and Warren reservoirs for the day was about lin. It was not known that nearly 3in. had fallen in the catchment at Mount Crawford. On the other hand, no action of any real effect could have been taken had this information been available. During Sunday the reservoir keeper at South Para (it was on his authority that the gates were opened) operated the gates maintaining the reservoir at full storage, and there was some overflow over the gates until early afternoon. The maximum flood passed the dam at midday and was probably slightly reduced by ponding in the dam and by operating the diversion tunnel to Barossa reservoir at maximum capacity. At the time of maximum flow 14 gates were open: this was essential to protect the reservoir, but it did not contribute to the flood peak, because the storm flow would have passed over the gates if they had not been held open. The police at Gawler were notified of the approaching flood condition between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. on Sunday.

Regarding the Torrens River storage, the Kangaroo Creek dam filled early on Sunday and overflowed. There is no control on the Kangaroo Creek spillway (as the honourable member pointed out), and the effect of Torrens flow was practically that of the natural flood passing down stream, probably delayed a little in passage through the reservoir and certainly not increased in intensity. The shape of the flood peak is not known and it is not possible to say whether the reservoir mitigated the peak in any way.

Regarding the Onkaparinga River, the situation was very similar to that in the Torrens. The reservoir was full before the storm and was maintained at constant level by careful manipulation of the gates. There was no capacity available to absorb any part of the flood. In this instance also notification was given to the police, and I understand that the reservoir keeper first communicated with them about 2 a.m. on Sunday.

The Engineer-in-Chief draws the following conclusion:

Water storage reservoirs are not suitable as flood control structures unless specific provision is made for this purpose and reserve capacity held against flood filling. On the nature of the storms experienced last week-end I should guess that any reserve capacity less than 1,000,000,000 gall. in each storage would not have played any great part in lessening the flood peak.

Like the honourable member, I regret that several people have not only been inconvenienced by what has happened but have also suffered some loss. However, I cannot do other than agree with the Engineer-in-Chief that a reservoir is provided to store water and is not a flood control measure. Also, it seems to me logical that the dams did not contribute or have any real effect on the flood, which would still have occurred had the dams not been there. According to the Engineer-in-Chief, the dams may even have assisted in lessening the extent or force of the flood.

#### DARTMOUTH DAM

Mr. CURREN: Will the Premier report to the House on the outcome of the discussions that he had late last week with the Premier of Victoria and the Commonwealth Minister for National Development about the Dartmouth dam?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes. I saw Sir Henry Bolte and we had a useful discussion in which he made clear that, if the Commonwealth Government was committed to the development of the Dartmouth dam as a project of national development importance, he considered himself committed also and there would be no question but that Victoria would co-operate. Sir Henry authorized me to make that clear as a result of the discussions I had with him. I also saw the Commonwealth Minister for National Development and the reports that had come to him to date concerning the development of the Dartmouth dam. The State of Victoria has done a costing on the building of the Dartmouth dam at this stage, and, of course, that State will be the constructing authority under the agreement. The present costing which that State arrived at was \$59,900,000. The Minister for National Development has asked the Snowy Mountains Authority to do a re-costing of the measure, but no field work has been done on this: it is simply a re-ascertainment of prices to start the diversionary works in January next. On present indications it is not expected that the

costings will show an escalation beyond the figures in the financial agreement that would require reference back for any further assistance to be considered. In the event of there being some excess over the \$62,700,000 (which, as I say, is not expected), the question arises about what would be the attitudes of the Governments concerned. It is agreed that any excess would be quite marginal and, while no-one at this stage, of course, is able to bind his Government (because the matter must be taken to the Cabinets concerned in the eventuality that I have outlined), on present indications there should be no difficulty about it and the project should proceed.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE

Mr. HALL: Will the Premier say whether he will now write to Mr. Hawke, the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, expressing South Australia's concern and opposition to any action the council may take to prejudice trade with South Africa? Previously, when I asked the Premier whether he would write to Mr. Hawke expressing our concern, as a State, he refused to do so and advised me to write. I have written to Mr. Hawke, as follows:

I was deeply disturbed to read in the *Financial Review* of July 28 last that the A.C.T.U. may take action to curtail our trading relations with South Africa. On Thursday last I requested the South Australian Premier, Mr. Dunstan, to write to your organization expressing our concern that South Australia's trade with South Africa, which forms a very significant proportion of the Australian total, might be prejudiced. He has advised me in the House that he will not do this and has suggested that I should write to you myself. I stress the importance of maintaining employment in this State and the fact that our National Government encourages trade with South Africa. It may be that the newspaper report to which I refer was ill-founded, and I hope that it was. In any case I seek your assurance that you personally will do your utmost to prevent any move within the A.C.T.U. which might be detrimental to South Australia in this regard.

Since writing that letter I have had no acknowledgment or reply. Three weeks has passed and Mr. Hawke still addresses the A.C.T.U., talking about and defending activities outside the normal union concern involved in politics. Therefore, my concern, and that of my Party, is that the A.C.T.U. may still be involved in activities prejudicial to South Australian trade and commerce. As Mr. Hawke has not seen fit to reply to my letter, will the Premier now write to him in the circumstances?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No.

### PRESS PASSES

Mr. HOPGOOD: Will the Attorney-General ask the Chief Secretary whether it is true that the Police Department has now withdrawn press passes and, if that is so, the reason for the withdrawal?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will obtain a reply for the honourable member.

### WATER RATES

Mr. CUMBE: Can the Premier say what additional revenues will accrue to the State as a result of the recently announced increases in water rates? On page 3491 of 1970-71 *Hansard* the Premier, in a Ministerial statement, announced increases in water rates and valuations. Valuations would be increased by between 7 per cent and 10 per cent and the rebate water charge was to be increased from 35c to 40c a thousand gallons. Several recent complaints have been made about these additional charges, but I do not know how much the State will receive in additional revenue, as this information was not contained in the Premier's statement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: From memory, it is between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 in a full year, but I will obtain an accurate report for the honourable member.

### HIGHBURY SCHOOL

Mrs. BYRNE: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the Highbury Primary School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Highbury Primary School site, consisting of 11 acres in area, was purchased late in 1959 for \$22,000.

### OVERLAND DERAILMENT

Dr. TONKIN: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say what effect the recent derailment of the Overland will have on passenger services between Melbourne and Adelaide, and when it is expected that the services will be restored to normal? I am sure we were all distressed to read the report of the derailment. I suppose the only bright spot in the report was the fact that it happened on the Victorian side of the border, not on the South Australian side. However, this does not detract from the seriousness of the incident, in which 15 people were injured and 12 carriages were derailed and seriously damaged.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The brightest spot of the whole incident was the fact that no-one was seriously hurt. In fact, I have been told that all of the 15 people to which the newspaper report refers were given casualty treatment (I

think that would probably be the best term to use) at the local hospital and all resumed their journey on the special train sent from Melbourne to replace the derailed train. I understand that that special train is scheduled to arrive in Adelaide within the next quarter of an hour. Passengers on that train who are travelling to Western Australia will be catered for by a special service, if necessary, to Port Augusta to enable them to join the east-west train, because the Commissioner has not delayed the 12.30 p.m. Adelaide to Port Pirie connecting train to Western Australia. Services will be continued on a daily basis between Adelaide and Melbourne, and it is expected that this evening's train to Melbourne will leave about 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. Although the time has not yet been determined, adequate notice will be given by means of mass media. All in all, everything possible has been done. I am more than satisfied with the report the Commissioner has given me that everything humanly possible is being done so that the interruption of services will have the least impact, taking all factors into account.

### APPRENTICESHIPS

Mr. SLATER: Has the Minister of Labour and Industry a reply to my recent question about the cancellation of indentures of apprenticeship?

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: During the 12 months to the end of July, 1971, 587 applications for cancellation of indentures of apprenticeship were made to the Apprenticeship Commission and, of these, 377 indentures were cancelled. During the previous 12 months, that, is from August, 1969, to July, 1970, 345 indentures were cancelled. The reasons for the cancellations in each of the two years were as follows:

	August, 1970— July, 1971	August, 1969— July, 1970
Joined Armed Services .	22	17
Left the State.....	53	48
Abandoned employment	85	68
Lack of interest.....	109	132
Physical disability . . .	36	22
Marriage (females) . . .	15	12
Incompatibility.....	14	8
Left during probationary period.....	13	15
Misconduct.....	19	21
Deceased.....	11	2
	377	345

The indentures of the other 210 apprentices were either suspended for a period or were

transferred to another employer. In each case, the apprentice and the employer, and often the parent or guardian, were interviewed by an apprentice supervisor of the Apprenticeship Commission. The fact that, of 587 applications for cancellation, action was successfully taken in 210 cases to enable the apprentice to continue his training is evidence of the value of the apprentice supervisors.

### RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Lands, a reply to my recent question about rural reconstruction?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: My colleague states that the honourable member is incorrect in saying that one or two of his constituents have been advised of the results of their applications for assistance under the Rural Industry Assistance Act on a duplicated sheet. In every case, a letter is forwarded to the applicant. This letter is signed either by the Executive Officer, Rural Industry Assistance Authority, or by some other officer on his behalf. The Minister has no objections to unsuccessful applicants being told why their application has been declined, and this practice will be followed in future.

Mr. HALL: Has the Premier a reply to my recent inquiry about difficulties that had been reported to me concerning application for rural reconstruction aid in South Australia?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Minister of Lands states that this State is administering the scheme in terms of the arrangements with the Commonwealth. It is neither no more nor no less sympathetic and helpful in its attitude than is the case elsewhere, and it is difficult to see how this could be otherwise if States implement the scheme in the terms in which it was laid down. It is true that the number of applications in this State has been surprisingly small, in view of the information given to the Government by the various grower organizations. The number of applications received to date is 285, and there seems to be an increasing trend in the numbers received. Comparison with the position in Western Australia is not necessarily relevant to the position in South Australia.

The report released by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in February, 1971, indicated that, of 14,200 farmers in Western Australia, some 3,000 (including 630 new land farmers) were in a hopeless financial position, and a further 3,500 to 4,500 (including 500 new land farmers) although not in such an extremely difficult position were experiencing

difficulty in servicing their debts. In these circumstances it might be expected that the number of applications in Western Australia would be higher than those coming forward in this State. At present no applicant in Western Australia has received assistance, as legislation has not yet been passed in that State, and no finance can be made available until such time as legislation is enacted. So, although it may be true that the amount involved in approved applications is as the Leader states, it is not true that any funds have yet been distributed.

The numbers of staff engaged for this work are, in the present circumstances, considered adequate to undertake the task involved. It is obviously unwise to engage a large staff without knowing the volume of work that is likely to be required for the undertaking. Most of the people engaged in this work have been employed from outside the Public Service, and it is surely reasonable that they can expect continuity of employment, as otherwise suitable people would not be interested in taking these positions. The Government regards it as very important that people dealing with this work should have knowledge and experience that will enable them appropriately to carry out the duties involved and to consider applications as sympathetically as possible. Further staff will be engaged should a need be shown for this action to be taken.

Concerning comparisons with other States, all States are required to administer this programme upon the same lines. However, my colleague has informed me that, after consulting with the Minister for Lands of New South Wales (Hon. T. L. Lewis), he has suggested that a meeting of administering officers be held to compare notes on the administration of the scheme. If this meeting is agreed to and if, as a result of it, a meeting of Ministers seems necessary to consider whether approaches should be made to the Commonwealth for changes in the scheme, my colleague will support such action. In the meantime the Leader may be assured that the administering authority in this State will see to it that South Australian farmers are dealt with on a no less favourable basis than their counterparts in other States. Experience in earlier schemes of drought relief has shown that generally, to their credit, South Australian farmers have been much more self-reliant than has been shown to be the case in some other States, and it may be for this reason that the number of applications in South Australia is relatively less than in some States and the demands for finance consequently so much less.

**GEPPS CROSS TECHNICAL SCHOOL**

Mr. JENNINGS: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my question of August 24 about the installation of a fire hydrant at the Gepps Cross Girls Technical High School?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: An order has been placed with the Engineering and Water Supply Department for the provision of a fire hydrant at the school. The latest advice is that it will be installed during the first week of the September school holidays.

**ROAD MAINTENANCE ACT**

Mr. CARNIE: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my question of August 24 about how much of the tax collected under the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act is collected from owners of vehicles registered in other States?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It is not possible to say how much of the road maintenance contribution is collected from owners registered in other States. However, about 33⅓ per cent of the revenue collected is attributable to owners of vehicles registered in South Australia for interstate trade and owners registered in other States.

**LERP**

Mr. BECKER: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation expedite an investigation into the possible eradicating of the insect lerp? I have been informed by a leading apiarist in Keith that this insect is causing considerable damage, as a result of which he and other persons have lost about \$20,000 worth of honey in the past 12 months. I believe that the Coonalpyn Downs council is to contact the Minister about this matter. Recently, the Keith Young Liberals passed a resolution, which I will read in order to illustrate the need for Government action in trying to eradicate this insect. The resolution states:

Due to the great damage done to red and pink gums in the Upper South-East and their possible extinction by the insect lerp, this council urges the Government to take immediate steps into research in possible action for the protection of the species which may survive this attack.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The honourable member will recall that I provided him with a fairly detailed reply on this matter from the Minister of Agriculture and that further interest was shown in the matter by his colleague the member for Victoria. I have again referred this matter to the Minister, pointing out that a further question has been asked and requesting him to consider whether his

department can provide the assistance sought. I shall be pleased now to refer this question to the Minister.

Mr. RODDA: As lerp is making severe inroads into the flora in the Upper South-East, and as the Minister has said that this insect is being freely parasited, can he now say whether he is discussing the matter with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization? Since I asked this question last week and since the member for Hanson has been interested in the matter, over the weekend I have spoken to many landholders who are concerned about this insect, which is attacking particularly pink gum. In view of what the Minister said in reply to the member for Hanson earlier this year that the insect was freely parasited, it would appear that the population of whatever it is that attacks this insect must have decreased. As the damage caused by this insect can be easily seen and as people are gravely concerned about this, will the Minister discuss with the C.S.I.R.O. the possibility of inducing some form of parasitic control?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Although I believe that the Minister of Agriculture would undoubtedly have taken this course, I shall be happy to ask whether he has inquired of the C.S.I.R.O. whether or not it can help.

**LAND ACQUISITION**

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister of Local Government investigate the granting of compensation for the loss of council rates arising from the Government's acquiring large tracts of land in the Gumeracha council area? When I asked a similar question last session, the Minister indicated that he would examine the overall situation in respect of district councils disadvantaged by Government operations, and I think that in that reply he referred to acquiring land for transport corridors in connection with the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study Plan, and so on. However, the position applying within the Gumeracha District Council is unique, as about 30 per cent of the area has been taken over largely for the operations of the Woods and Forests Department in connection with the planting of pine trees. It has been pointed out by the Mayor (Mr. R. B. Hicks) that this is a commercial operation, as the pines will eventually be sold for profit, and local residents consider that these operations are being subsidized by ratepayers in the area.

This year, the council suffered a loss in rates of, I think, \$1,150, the assessment being reduced by about \$11,000 as a result of land being

acquired by the Government. I suggest to the Minister that this position is distinct from that of councils in the metropolitan area where nowhere near a third of the area would be taken over by the Government for a revenue-raising purpose involving, for instance, the growing of pine trees. As the Gumeracha council is in a most difficult position, I ask the Minister whether he will investigate this matter.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Although I think that information has already been provided on this matter, I do not readily recall what is the current position, but I shall be pleased to examine the matter again and to obtain a considered report.

### GEPPS CROSS ABATTOIRS

Mr. VENNING: Will the Minister of Works, representing the Minister of Agriculture, say who agreed last week to the demands of Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs employees who evidently went on strike during the week? I believe that this stoppage was only short-lived and that the demands of employees were met. However, there seem to be some irregularities in the information concerning how these demands were met. A report in today's *Advertiser* states that an application by the Meat Industry Employees Union for four weeks' annual leave and seven days' sick pay was considered and granted by the board only yesterday.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will take up this matter with the Minister of Agriculture, who is responsible for the operations of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board. However, as this involves an industrial matter, the Minister of Labour and Industry may be able to give the honourable member some information now.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: I think I can enlighten the honourable member on this matter. Indeed, I believe that he and most of his colleagues would know that four weeks' annual leave represents Government policy in respect of all Government departments and semi-Government instrumentalities. The press has reported the true situation this morning, as the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board decided to grant four weeks' annual leave, etc.

Mr. Venning: On whose authority?

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: The board is autonomous and has the authority to deal with requests made by employees. The board, which is in complete control of its operations,

made this decision. Members opposite seem to gloat over the situation and to seize every opportunity they can get to demonstrate their hatred for the workers and their opposition to improving conditions. They leave the impression that they would like to see the State tied up in industrial strife all the time.

Mr. VENNING: How does the Minister justify five weeks' pay for four weeks of holiday leave, which was granted by the Minister of Agriculture to employees at Gepps Cross last week? Many of my constituents would be happy if they could deliver four bales of wool and be paid for five bales, or if they delivered four bullocks at the abattoir and were paid for five bullocks. It is difficult to understand how the Minister can justify five weeks' pay for four weeks' leave.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: I think the honourable member is confused. He should realize that no such thing as five weeks' pay and four weeks' annual leave has been granted. It was four weeks' annual leave and seven days' sick leave. That was the decision handed down by the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board. It has nothing to do with my department and we made no decision on this matter. It is entirely the board's decision with respect to its employees. I think the honourable member has been misled by Mr. Brooks (President of the Stockowners Association).

Mr. Venning: I think he was on the right track.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: What the honourable member wants me to say is that the Government made a secret deal, as Mr. Brooks has suggested. Of course, that is not so.

### MANNUM HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. WARDLE: Has the Minister of Works a reply to my recent question about the Mannum High School?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Tenders for the conversion of the existing sports store to a canteen, and the erection of a new solid-construction sports store at the Mannum High School, were called on August 19, 1971, closing on September 3, 1971.

### TORRENS RIVER

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Minister of Works a reply to the question I recently asked about works being undertaken along the Torrens River?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: To enable the River Torrens Committee to commence preliminary activities regarding future action under

the River Torrens Act, 1970, approval was given for the expenditure of \$800 for a title search of the Torrens River and adjacent land upstream from the Hackney bridge. The title search has been completed for that portion of the Torrens River within the corporations of St. Peters, Walkerville, Payneham and 80 per cent of Enfield. The details are now being plotted and it is proposed that a copy of the completed plan be forwarded to the respective councils for their information. At this early stage, several parcels of land have been suggested for acquisition under the Act, but no action has been taken pending completion of the title search. However, there is a restriction in the acquisition of land because only up to 200ft. from the top of the river bank can be acquired. It is expected that difficulties will occur because of this limitation. An amount of \$5,000 has been placed on the Estimates for 1971-72 and, at this stage, has been apportioned as follows:

Torrens River Works		Amount of proposed subsidy
Council	Reserve	
Enfield.....	Pitman Park	1,000
	Beefacres	
Walkerville . .	Adjacent to	
	Marden bridge	1,000
St. Peters . . .	Harrow Road	400
Woodville . . .	Mountbatten	1,000
	Tedder	
	Blarney	
Campbelltown .	Adjacent to	
	Riverview Drivd	000

### PORT AUGUSTA HOUSING

Mr. KENEALLY: Has the Premier, as the Minister in charge of housing, a reply to my recent question about housing at Port Augusta?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Housing Trust has received no official request for housing at Port Augusta for American personnel. The trust's area officer at Port Augusta reports that he can recall only one inquiry from an American for housing and that was about 12 months ago. In that instance private accommodation was obtained.

### GLYNDE LAND

Mr. SLATER: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about land in Davis Road, Glynde?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Education Department owns land in Davis Road, Glynde, with an area of 9 acres 6 perches. This land is being held for the eventual erection of a

primary school thereon. There are no plans at present for the establishment of a school on this property.

### PENOLA COURTHOUSE

Mr. RODDA: Has the Attorney-General a reply to my recent question about the Penola courthouse?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Funds have been approved for the construction of the proposed new courthouse and police station at Penola, and documentation has commenced for the calling of tenders in February, 1972. It is expected that the building will be ready for occupation in December, 1972.

### MURRAY RIVER BRIDGE

Mr. CURREN: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on August 18 about another bridge across the Murray River?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Investigations by the Highways Department for a bridge across the Murray River at Berri are continuing. Foundation testing of the possible sites under consideration will be undertaken in the next few months and a full report for submission to the Parliamentary standing committee will be prepared during 1972.

### SPEED ZONES

Mr. FERGUSON: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether he has received from residents of Two Wells, and considered, a petition concerning speed zones in that township? Last April, I asked the Minister the following question:

Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the Road Traffic Board intends to resite speed zones on the Port Wakefield Road south of the township of Two Wells?

In explaining that question, I said I understood that the Minister was to receive a copy of the petition. In reply, he said:

At this time I have not seen the petition. Whether it is filtering through the system to me, I cannot say ... I will inquire of the Road Traffic Board to see whether it has the petition; if it does not have it, I will ask the honourable member to give me a copy. I will certainly look at the question he has raised.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As I am afraid that I do not recall the petition, I will have inquiries made and see whether it is necessary for me to ask the honourable member for a copy of it.

### EMERGENCY FIRE SERVICES

Mr. EVANS: Has the Premier a reply to my recent question which was about the fire at the Blackwood High School and in which I said that I appreciated the help given by voluntary workers and by the Public Buildings Department?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Minister of Agriculture states:

My attention has been drawn to press reports and publicity concerning the regrettable fire which destroyed buildings and equipment at Blackwood High School recently. This matter does not come directly within my Ministerial jurisdiction but in view of inaccuracies in some of the published statements and the obvious inferences which would be drawn from them concerning the operations of the Emergency Fire Services I was prompted to seek information from the Director of Emergency Fire Services.

I have been assured that the facts of the matter are as follows:

- (1) \*South Australian Fire Brigade assistance was not requested.
- (2) E.F.S. had sufficient equipment and was able to cope. In fact it appears that it did an excellent job.
- (3) Although the nearest hydrants were 400ft. to 500ft. away the E.F.S. had ample hose and five lines were used.
- (4) Six appliances and 63 men attended.
- (5) Single storey inter-connected wooden buildings were involved and 50 per cent saved.

\* N.B. S.A.F.B. does assist when requested. E.F.S. had recently conducted an exercise and was conversant with the site, location of hydrants, etc.

In reference to the question asked by the honourable member in the House of Assembly on August 24, 1971, regarding this matter, I point out that the S.A. Fire Brigade does assist the E.F.S. when requested to do so. It is unfortunate that the E.F.S. members who so competently handled a difficult fire have been upset by the misleading statements which have been made.

Mr. EVANS: Will the Premier ascertain whether the Flinders University and the Bedford Park Teachers College are within the Emergency Fire Services area of fire control or has the South Australian Fire Brigade accepted this responsibility? Before explaining my question, I thank the Premier for his earlier reply, because it has cleared up doubts in the minds of many people concerning the Blackwood fire. However, there seems to be doubt about who is responsible for fighting a fire if it breaks out in buildings at the Flinders University or the Bedford Park Teachers College. This may be incorrect information, but in the past the local E.F.S. unit has been responsible, but it does not have the equipment to fight fires in multi-storey buildings. For that

reason, if a major fire occurred I assume that the Fire Brigade would be responsible for controlling it.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will get a reply for the honourable member.

Mr. EVANS: Can the Minister of Works find out why electrical switchrooms at schools are not built away from the main building or at least housed in a fire-proof section of the main building? It appears that the recent fire at the Blackwood High School broke out alongside or in one of the walls of the electrical switchroom, which was in a timber-frame section of the school. Once the fire took hold, it was virtually impossible to save the building. The problem arises that in most schools the switchrooms are in the main building. There is no reason why switchroom equipment could not be located away from the main building in a fire-proof or brick building so that there would not be the risk of losing the whole main building or much of it if fire broke out in the switchroom. Of course, we cannot discount the fact that someone might have started the fire and that it was not the result of an electrical fault. However, the provision of a separate switchroom would at least have eliminated that doubt about how the fire started. Even if a separate switchroom had been available and the fire had started there, this school would have been without power for some time.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I wonder whether the honourable member has a fire-proof room separate from his house for his switchboard.

Mr. Evans: That's my money involved, not the people's money. Use your common sense.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I do not feel competent to answer the honourable member's technical question about why fire-proof rooms and separate buildings are not provided for switchboards in schools. As I think the matter should be given some attention, I shall have an officer investigate it, and I will bring down a report.

### BRIGHTON ROAD

Mr. MATHWIN: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say how many more properties on Brighton Road, between the Hove railway crossing and Sturt Road, Brighton, will be acquired?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The number escapes me at present, but I will check my crystal ball and see whether I can provide a reply for the honourable member.



### TROLLEY BUSES

Dr. TONKIN: Will the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the Government intends to consider re-introducing trolley buses in Adelaide as part of the transport research programme that he announced recently? I understand that the Minister was reported in the weekend press to be wondering why we had got rid of trolley buses, because they were clean, silent, and emitted no exhaust fumes. The Minister wondered whether these buses were really as uneconomic as they were supposed to have been. I find this statement hard to reconcile with the Minister's concept of dial-a-bus transport, and I wondered whether he would clarify the situation for the public.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I can understand the honourable member's finding it hard to reconcile anything, because of his bitter opposition to progressive moves in the transport field. However, trolley buses were cut out of Adelaide's transport system a few years ago on the basis of the economics of the position then. I have asked the Municipal Tramways Trust to consider whether the same economic factors apply at present as applied then. Trolley buses have disadvantages, as they are inflexible compared to diesel buses. However, they also have extreme advantages, and I should think that many residents of the honourable member's district would be only too delighted to get back to silent and pollutant-free trolley buses, as opposed to the noisy pollutant buses running at present. The honourable member may have some idea about whether that is so, but I should imagine that the trolley buses that I understand previously ran in the honourable member's district would be welcomed back by most of the people there. However, the matter is merely in the investigation stage and, when the necessary inquiries have been made and the report submitted, it will be considered and a decision made.

### PETERBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. ALLEN: Can the Minister of Education indicate when a Matriculation class will be established at the Peterborough High School? The Minister will recall that from time to time persons in the Peterborough district have made submissions to have a Matriculation class established at this high school. In fact, they were disappointed at the recent announcement that two such classes would be established in country schools but that the Peterborough High School was not one of them. The pattern in the country areas has been that, once a Matricula-

tion class commences, enrolments increase, and the people in the Peterborough district consider that, if a class is established there, there will be sufficient students to fill it.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: From recollection, Matriculation classes will be established in at least three country high schools next year (Gladstone, Balaklava and Penola), and I think another such class may even be projected. I know that Peterborough High School applied last year to have such a class established for 1971, and that request was supported by the school council. Whether the school has applied this year escapes my recollection, although I know that the council wrote again regarding the matter. Our policy on establishing Matriculation classes is that the school council should be able to guarantee an attendance of at least 20 students before the class is established. I am sure that the honourable member appreciates that, to establish a Matriculation class, additional teachers must be provided, and if these teachers, who at this level are in extremely short supply, are involved in teaching only a few students, that is an uneconomic use of scarce teaching resources. Therefore, the reasons for this rule are well founded and necessary for the economic conduct of the education system. I understand that the Leaving class at Peterborough High School comprises not many more than 20 students (it may be about 27 or 30), and the expected number of Matriculation students is certainly many fewer than 20, probably fewer than 10. In these circumstances, unfortunately the school does not qualify for the provision of a Matriculation class. I think the honourable member knows of the Government's rural scholarship scheme, which applies to all students who do not have the appropriate secondary facilities available in their areas. In terms of that scheme, prospective Matriculation students at Peterborough High School will qualify for the award of these scholarships. I hope that all students from that school who wish to study for the Matriculation will apply for these scholarships, as I specifically encouraged them to do when I spoke to them a few weeks ago. I should like to be able to say that we will establish Matriculation classes throughout the State, regardless of cost but, unfortunately, that is not possible at present. The Government, in its wisdom, has determined the course of action with respect to rural scholarships as a means of helping country parents meet the cost of sending children away to study for Matriculation at other than their local school. I should like to add that the new Matriculation

classes to be established in 1972 number six in all, which is more than the number of new Matriculation classes that have been established for a long time.

### INTEREST RATES

Dr. EASTICK: Has the Premier a reply to my question about interest rates on Housing Trust building funds, and can he say whether there has been any change in the position as a result of discussions in Canberra last Friday?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: During 1970-71 capital funds for housing purposes were made available through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement by the Commonwealth at 1 per cent per annum below the normal long-term Government borrowing rate, that is at a net 6 per cent per annum. The amount involved was \$25,000,000, of which \$11,750,000 went to the Housing Trust and the remainder was made available to the State Bank and to building societies for lending to finance home purchases. The housing agreement terminated on June 30, 1971, and the matter of a new arrangement was further discussed at a conference of Housing Ministers last Friday. Meanwhile, the Government had proceeded upon the broad basis referred to in the recent Commonwealth Budget announcement. It has assumed that the requisite housing funds will in future be secured as ordinary State borrowing for which the present long-term rate is 7 per cent per annum, but that there will be some Commonwealth assistance by way of grants which will reduce the net interest costs of the housing moneys so that they remain at least as favourable as in 1970-71. Allocations are currently being made out of the Loan Account to the Housing Trust on the basis of \$12,250,000 for 1971-72 at a net interest rate yet to be finally determined, whilst new funds for home lending to the extent of \$14,250,000 are currently being made available to the State Bank and building societies upon the same net terms as last year, that is at 6½ per cent per annum so that they can be lent at 6¼ per cent per annum to home purchasers. The only other Government provisions for public housing are small amounts under the Advances for Homes Act. These are to supplement loans earlier made under that Act to meet minor requirements for additions and re-advances. Only about \$50,000 will be required in 1971-72. The new funds will cost the Government 7 per cent if borrowed long-term, and rather less for shorter terms, but to be consistent with the terms of other extensive lending through the State Bank and building

societies these moneys are being lent by the Government directly to home owners at 6¾ per cent per annum.

The Housing Ministers' conference last Friday came to no conclusions. The Ministers unanimously expressed their disappointment and dismay that the Commonwealth Government had seen fit to promulgate proposals for a new arrangement of Commonwealth assistance to States for housing without consulting the States about that arrangement before it was announced. We were merely called to Canberra to accept a *fait accompli*; we had no say in the matter other than as to some minor details of the arrangement. The Victorian and Queensland Liberal Ministers for Housing were most bitter in their attacks on the Commonwealth Government, and tried to adjourn the conference completely until the Commonwealth Government agreed to maintain the old housing agreement for another year while we sorted out the differences. I may say, however, that the Labor Minister responsible for housing in South Australia would not agree to that course, but indicated that South Australia regarded the Commonwealth's offer of a subsidy towards the cost of low-income housing as a better proposition (although only marginally better) than the 1 per cent interest rate reduction. The South Australian Treasury had done its homework, and any sums that were done would show that this was clearly the case.

There was a considerable anomaly which could affect our grants in the future if the arrangement was spread over five years. The arrangement does not meet the needs of the States in providing low-cost housing, as was pointed out by all the Housing Ministers in November last year when requesting consideration by the Commonwealth Government of a new arrangement, but the position that faces us and worries us about the future is that not all States have previously budgeted on the same basis for housing. The Western Australian Government has not taken as much money as the other States have taken under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. Instead, because it was previously a claimant to the Grants Commission, it used State Loan moneys for this purpose. It could not continue to do that without getting a minimal return from the Commonwealth Government under the new arrangement and, therefore, it had to specify the whole of the moneys it was previously devoting to housing as moneys taken in respect of this arrangement, and that would increase the amount it specified for housing, and

therefore subject to the subsidy arrangement, by about 100 per cent. The increase in its share of the total allocation, without the other States doing anything, would reduce our share of the housing subsidy moneys. That seemed to me and to other Ministers to be a most unsatisfactory arrangement and, consequently, the Ministers required of the Commonwealth (and the Commonwealth was reluctant to accede to the request, but we all demanded it) that there should be an adjournment for a few weeks while not only housing but Treasury officers should talk together with the Commonwealth in order to iron out anomalies of this kind in the proposed Commonwealth arrangement, and that there should be another Housing Ministers' meeting immediately the officers had reported to their respective Governments.

#### **SEACLIFF PARK INTERSECTION**

Mr. HOPGOOD: Has the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to the question I asked on August 11 about an intersection at Seacliff Park?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In the three years before the end of 1970, there have been seven accidents, only one of which resulted in an injury. For the period up to July 7 of this year there has been one reported accident, with no injury resulting. The low accident rate indicates the apparent adequacy of the island system at this intersection and, accordingly, it seems that no adjustment to the island is necessary.

#### **GOVERNMENT PRODUCE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. CARNIE: Can the Minister of Works say what rents are paid by the various companies that lease land and facilities from the Government Produce Department's works at Port Lincoln?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will obtain the information for the honourable member.

#### **PENONG SCHOOL**

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the Penong school?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Penong school is one of a group of 22 country schools for which the feasibility of providing 240-volt generating plant is currently being investigated by officers of the Public Buildings Department. It is expected that a report will be available soon.

#### **MURRAY BRIDGE MAIN**

Mr. WARDLE: Can the Minister of Works say whether any of the existing reticulation systems near the new Murray Bridge to Onka-

paringa main will be pressurized in the future from the main? Several of the reticulation mains run between six and 12 miles from the township's supply in Murray Bridge and some of these will be near the pressurized scheme of the Murray Bridge to Onkaparinga main. Because of the increased pressure that the Murray Bridge to Onkaparinga main would give the systems, thus making them more efficient, I ask whether any of them will be linked to the main.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I am unaware whether this will be the case, but I will obtain a report for the honourable member.

#### **NORTH-EAST ROAD**

Mr. SLATER: Will the Minister of Roads and Transport ask the Road Traffic Board to investigate the need for installation of pedestrian crossing lights on the North-East Road, Windsor Gardens, between Cooke Road and Albert Street, near the Windsor Hotel? Constituents of mine have drawn attention to the difficulty of pedestrians wishing to cross this highway safely, particularly in peak traffic hours, when accidents have occurred.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be pleased to get the exercise moving for the honourable member.

#### **PROSPECT DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL**

Mr. COUMBE: Will the Minister of Education give me the latest information on the redevelopment scheme being arranged by the Education Department and the Prospect City Council? In recent correspondence to me the Minister explained that his department was purchasing houses or properties in Olive Street, adjacent to the school, and that when these became available the Public Buildings Department would go ahead with the redevelopment of that area. However, the council is anxious for the Government to acquire properties in Boyle Street, which is the next street, so that Boyle Street, Olive Street and Braund Road are all involved, the idea being that there should be an access road between Gladstone Road and Boyle Street. Will the Minister take up this matter with his department, and possibly with the Public Buildings Department, and supply me with an up-to-date report on the state of the negotiations?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I shall be pleased to do that. In relation to at least some of those houses an opportunity was missed only a short time ago and, as new owners have moved into them, we have determined that we will not proceed with compulsory acquisition now but will try to

negotiate the purchase. Regarding policy on the overall scheme, I will consult with my officers and obtain a report for the honourable member.

### AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Dr. TONKIN: Can the Minister of Education say when it is intended to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Agricultural Education, Research and Extension, regarding the establishment of residential farm colleges? I understand that residential farm colleges have been proposed at Cleve, Loxton and Naracoorte, among other places, and that they will cater both for male and female students. This is a matter of concern to members of the rural community and the public generally.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No, I cannot. I am sure the honourable member appreciates that these colleges are, according to the committee's report, meant to be residential farm colleges, each catering for 100 students in residence for a year. Apart from the cost of any college facilities that will be necessary, the cost of the residential facilities at each of the colleges would be between \$500,000 and \$600,000 and, of course, that would be multiplied three times if these colleges are to be built at Cleve, Naracoorte, and Loxton. Therefore, there is a serious financial problem in relation to the proposal. The second aspect is that the committee recommended the establishment of these farm colleges as part of an overall scheme involving the phasing out of vocational agricultural courses from secondary classes in all Government schools throughout the State, other than at Urrbrae. I think the honourable member would appreciate the possible consequences and difficulties that might be experienced in the Education Department if we concurred in such a proposition. At present, no Government decision has been taken on this matter. Certainly, no Government decision has been taken on the phasing out of vocational work in agriculture from the secondary schools, and that, I believe, would be a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of farm colleges. It is likely to be some time before any thought can be given to commencing any one of the projects recommended by the committee.

### RENMARK HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. CURREN: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the installation of fans at the Renmark High School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Twenty-five fans are to be installed in wooden classrooms at the Renmark High School. The projected date of installation is about early October, 1971.

### LAND TAX

Dr. EASTICK: Has the Treasurer a reply to my recent question about the payment of land tax on Housing Trust land?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Section 14 (1) of the South Australian Housing Trust Act, 1936-1965, provides that "all real and personal property of the trust shall be held by the trust for and on behalf of the Crown". Land held by the Housing Trust is, therefore, Crown land for the purposes of section 10 (1) (a) of the Land Tax Act. Section 10 (1) (a) exempts Crown land that is not for the time being subject to any agreement for sale or right of purchase. Section 19 provides for the payment of land tax by owners of Crown perpetual leases, with certain exemptions, including those perpetual leases subject to revaluation of rent. In broad terms, the effect of the Land Tax Act is to levy the tax as a source of revenue on land that has been alienated from the Crown to the extent that the owners have the right to the fee simple or they have a perpetual lease that is not subject to revaluation of rent. The lessees of Crown land referred to by the honourable member would have terminating leases, subject to revision of rental should the leases be renewed. While they may have some advantage in not being required to pay land tax they do not have the advantages of equity and security of tenure that may be enjoyed by owners of adjoining land who are required to pay the tax.

Mr. Evans for Mr. RODDA (on notice): How many appeals were lodged against the recent quinquennial land tax assessment?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: A total of 14,700 objections was lodged against the 1970 quinquennial land tax assessment. These objections arose from about 380,000 notices of assessment issued in respect of taxable land.

### PARINGA PARK LAND

Mr. MATHWIN: Has the Minister of Education a reply to the question I asked last month about the lease of land owned by the Education Department, this land being the site of the new Paringa Park Primary School? Having asked whether that lease had been renewed, I point out that this matter involves a plan (to which I understand the Minister is sympathetic) to develop areas for use by local organizations and residents.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am sorry that that reply has not been given to the honourable member. The normal list of questions waiting to be answered is not inside my folder today. However, I understand that the Engineering and Water Supply Department's lease over the land in question has not been renewed and, as the honourable member will appreciate, we are in the process of negotiating with the Brighton council on this matter. Although I hope that an announcement can be made shortly, I will certainly ascertain what has happened concerning the reply, which should have been available for the honourable member, regarding the lease. I recall being told what the reply was, but I will check on why it has not been provided.

#### AMERICAN RIVER WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Recently, a visit was made to American River by an Engineering and Water Supply Department officer to discuss the water supply scheme, which I understand has been accepted by residents of American River, who are naturally anxious for it to proceed. However, I am receiving letters from landholders along the route of the proposed main who are in some financial difficulty, and I think the Minister of Works also is probably receiving representations from them. Although I cannot but sympathize with these landholders, as well as with the people living at American River, I wonder whether the Minister has been able to take this matter any further since the meeting was held in connection with this matter.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I have had no report from the department following the officer's visit to Kangaroo Island but, in view of the honourable member's question, I will certainly call for a report. I think the honourable member appreciates the tremendous problem that exists: as he pointed out, certain landholders, whose properties are subject to rating because the main will pass through their area on its way to American River, cannot bear the full cost. I think this was previously understood and was being taken into account, but it presents a difficulty. I shall have the matter checked and let the honourable member know what is the position as soon as possible.

#### FLINDERS RANGES

Mr. ALLEN: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation give more publicity to the fact that a 16 mm. coloured film, depicting the wildflowers in the Flinders Ranges, is avail-

able? Members may be interested to know that 1968 was the last year in which the display of wildflowers in the Flinders Ranges compared with the display of the present season. The former member for Stuart asked several questions about filming these wildflowers and, in reply to one question, the then Minister of Tourism (Hon. D. N. Brookman) stated:

Arrangements have been made for a two-man photography and filming team to work in the Flinders Ranges during the week commencing September 23. Pictures and movie film will be taken of the mountains during the wildflower season. The bureau released a new 16mm. film *Flinders—Ranges of Legend* earlier this year, using material obtained last spring. Movie film obtained this month will be stored for a future production and still pictures used in folders, displays and other publicity as opportunities occur. It has also been arranged for a photographer from the Australian Tourist Commission to visit the Wilpena area for about seven days from September 22. His pictures will be used by the commission in its work of publicizing Australia's tourist attractions overseas. The film *Flinders—Ranges of Legend* is available for showing, and there would be no difficulty about showing it for honourable members in the Tourist Bureau theatre.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be glad to do what I can in this regard. I will discuss the matter with the Director of the Tourist Bureau and see what use is being made of this film. Having had the opportunity some time ago to see the film, I recommend it as an excellent advertisement of the Flinders Ranges, and I hope the Director has been taking every opportunity possible to use it.

#### PORT LINCOLN HOUSING

Mr. CARNIE: Can the Premier, as Minister in charge of housing, say whether any of the 27 Housing Trust houses being constructed, or any of the 30 to be commenced in this financial year, in Port Lincoln will be rental-grant houses? These small two-bedroom houses are usually reserved for pensioners, as they provide good accommodation at a price that pensioners can afford. Although a few of these houses are available in Port Lincoln, it seems that the time has come when three or four more are required. I have received representations from people who would be eligible for these houses, and one or two of the cases concerned were tragic ones. However, there simply are no houses available; it is necessary for the people concerned to wait until a house becomes vacant, and this could be a long time. Will the Premier ask officers of the Housing Trust whether the demand now warrants the construction of more of these houses?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will get a report for the honourable member on the types of house being provided and the basis on which the trust is proceeding. From memory, I do not think the houses he has mentioned are rental-grant houses, but I will obtain an accurate report.

### **TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Does the Minister of Education intend to take any action in respect of the submission made to him by the Academic Staff Association of the South Australian Institute of Technology? This submission was to the effect that the proposed Tertiary Education Committee and the Board of Advanced Education could be co-ordinated as one body, to be known as the Tertiary Education Co-ordinating Committee, with subsequent subcommittees.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I shall be making an announcement on this matter shortly.

### **RADIOACTIVITY**

Mr. BECKER: Can the Minister of Works say whether the Engineering and Water Supply Department has taken any radioactivity counts since the French atomic blasts occurred in the Pacific Ocean? If it has, can he say what were the readings and give an assurance that the results were not harmful?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: As I think that constant readings are taken I am certain that the reply to the first part of the question is "Yes". As I am not aware of what the readings are, I cannot answer the last part of the honourable member's question about whether there is any danger from the test. The other day I noticed that, for the time being at least, the French had postponed or called off further atomic tests in the Pacific area. However, there is no guarantee that they will not recommence the tests at some future time. I will get a report for the honourable member.

### **SOLDIER SETTLERS**

Mr. RODDA: In view of the recent announcement by the Minister of Lands regarding the zone 5 rental case, can the Minister of Works say what will be the situation with regard to those people who have bought land in the zone 5 area and those who have inherited properties? As the Minister knows, the number of original settlers has diminished by about 20. There have been several sales, and people have inherited properties as a result of deaths. In view of the

Minister's announcement last week that a decision will soon be made with regard to the rents, we are interested to know what will happen under the agreement to people who are not soldier settlers in their own right.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The honourable member is possibly aware that representatives of the settlers will meet the Minister or the Director of Lands on Friday next to discuss a few outstanding points in relation to suggestions made by the Minister to the settlers towards a settlement. Although the matter is not finally settled, I hope that after Friday's meeting it will be settled. Regarding the honourable member's specific question, my understanding is that those people who have already signed leases and are still on the properties will benefit from any alteration made. In other words, they will be treated no differently from those who have not signed leases. Secondly, people who have inherited properties (for instance, a wife who has inherited her husband's property) will also benefit from any concessions made in the settlement. However, where a sale has taken place, the concessions will not apply. As the sale was entered into on the basis of the final rental, the people who purchased at that time would have been fully aware of the annual rental required of them, unless they freeholded the property, and no doubt would have purchased on that basis. It is hardly reasonable for those people to say to the Government, "We have made a bad deal," and ask the Government to attend to it. I do not think that any organization other than the Government would even expect to be approached by people on that basis. Moreover, if the benefit was handed on in these cases, the person who should benefit would be the settler who sold the property originally. Although that is my understanding of the position, I shall have the matter checked and bring down a report.

### **MINES AND WORKS INSPECTION ACT**

Mr. GUNN: Has the Premier, as Minister of Development and Mines, a reply to my recent question about the operation at Coober Pedy of the Mines and Works Inspection Act?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The subject of back-filling of bulldozer cuts within the opal fields is being dealt with at present in the new Mining Bill and there is no provision under the Mines and Works Inspection Act for the department to enforce back-filling of such cuts on grounds other than safety. The amendments to the Mines and Works Inspection Act made last year were with regard to matters

relating to amenity, and did not deal with the opal-field situation. The notices which are given under the Mines and Works Inspection Act and which relate to the opal fields relate only to safety; these provisions have always been in the Act and are simply being carried out as they previously have been carried out. The department is indeed under obligation to issue instructions for back-filling of all large diameter drill holes which, in the opinion of the inspectors, constitute a safety hazard, within the opal fields or elsewhere, but the notices are confined to that area and do not relate to the amendments made to the Mines and Works Inspection Act last year.

### NUMBER PLATES

Mr. HALL: Will the Premier ask Cabinet to reconsider the decision of the Minister of Roads and Transport to implement a monopoly of supply of reflectorized number plates by the Motor Vehicles Department? Recently (on August 3, I think), the Minister outlined to the House a proposal whereby the Motor Vehicles Department would be the only supplier of reflectorized number plates.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Distributor.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: There is a difference, isn't there?

Mr. HALL: If it is distribution, I should be happy if I could receive further information. If my question is wrongly based, it is because of my lack of information. Perhaps it is my fault that I have not sought more information before, but I am seeking it now. I ask the Premier to reconsider this facet of the matter; I am sure he will tell me if I am wrong. The explanation given by the Minister of Roads and Transport is as follows:

These will be sold from the time of their introduction by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles only.

In reply to the Minister of Education, I think I am right in my interpretation that only the Registrar will supply them. "Sale" is synonymous with "supply".

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. HALL: I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, are as amazed as I am at the childish chattering on the front bench opposite.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You're only chattering about—

Mr. HALL: I know that the Premier is waiting breathlessly for me to finish my explanation, but the Minister's statement is that the Motor Vehicles Department will be the

only supplier, the only group or supplier to sell the plates; not to distribute, but to supply.

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. HALL: Should I start again, Mr. Speaker? I am as confused as the Premier now.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister's behaviour is disgraceful.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader will continue his explanation.

Mr. HALL: The Minister has stated:

It seems certain that the plates will be available at the retail price of \$1.70 a pair. These will be sold from the time of their introduction by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles only.

I have been approached by a person in Mount Gambier who supplies between \$400 and \$500 worth of vehicle plates a month at present, expressing concern that his business will be lost. The example given previously about why it was necessary that the Motor Vehicles Department be the sole supplier was that a cost as high as \$7 a pair had been stated. However, the person who has complained to me has costed his production on the basis of reflectorized plates only and says he can supply them for \$2.30 a pair. Industry in Mount Gambier is decentralized (small though it may be), and Mount Gambier is only one example: I am sure that many larger towns in South Australia also supply number plates. I see damage being done to individuals who operate relatively small businesses if the Motor Vehicles Department is to be the sole supplier. I draw the Premier's attention to the fact that action contemplated by my Government was on the basis that a monopoly over supply would not be given to any one supplier, and that policy applied to the Motor Vehicles Department. Therefore, in view of the difficulty that may be encountered, I ask the Premier whether he will again submit the matter to Cabinet and allow those who already supply number plates to continue to do so under the provisions governing the supplying of compulsory reflectorized plates.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Before the announcement was made, the members who represent Whyalla and Mount Gambier had already taken up with the Government the case of manufacturers in those cities. Proper consideration is being given to the matter and I assure the honourable member that I will give him the additional information.

### LAURA RAILWAY CROSSING

Mr. VENNING: Will the Minister of Roads and Transport act immediately to remove the serious traffic hazard at the level crossing which is adjacent to the railway yards at Laura and on the road from Caltowie to Laura? As recently as last Saturday evening, another serious accident occurred at this crossing, three young ladies being taken to hospital with badly-gashed heads. At the request of a constituent, I went to Laura and inspected this hazard yesterday afternoon. On my arrival, the Chairman and the District Clerk of the council were there, and the Railways Department employees were busy reinstating the crossing. The cattle pit at this crossing extends about 15ft. on to the roadway, past the railway alignment, and guarding the cattle pit is the heavily constructed railway iron that we see at many other railway crossings in South Australia. I understand from my colleague and the council that many accidents have occurred at this spot over a long period. As long ago as 1961 the Highways Department surveyed this hazard, but all that has been done has been that additional signs have been placed on the road at a position back from this point. Therefore, I ask the Minister to act immediately to remove this hazard before further deaths occur.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am rather surprised that the honourable member has waited for 10 years before pressing this matter and then wants action taken immediately (which I presume means this afternoon). I will certainly have the matter investigated and find out what remedial action can be taken if the situation is as the honourable member has described it.

### EDUCATION STATEMENT

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister of Education say whether he has sent a copy of the document dealing with the meeting at the Norwood Town Hall to all Government schools in South Australia, irrespective of whether the schools made a submission to him regarding educational needs? Today members received from the Minister's office a document, and an accompanying letter stating that this statement has been circulated to all members and school committees. The document is political, with frequent references to the Commonwealth Government and with the concluding statement that "the ball is surely in the Commonwealth Government's court". I know that three schools in my district sent to me submissions to be forwarded to the Minister.

However, in view of his reply by letter to other members on this side, in which similar political comments were made, I thought it best, if anything was to be done, to forward individual items. Nevertheless, this letter indicates that the Minister has seen fit to circulate this political document to all school committees, irrespective of whether they made a submission.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I took the decision, first, to forward the document to all members, regardless of whether they had passed on to me submissions they had received. I could not know what submissions they might have received but had not passed on to the department. When I had taken that decision, the natural consequence was to distribute the document to all schools, simply on the basis that I would not know of some schools that had made submissions to individual members. Rather than have a situation in which someone would miss out on the statement that was being made, it seemed preferable to send it to all schools.

As the honourable member has described it as a political document, let me say that the survey with which that statement deals was initiated entirely by Liberal Governments. It was a survey about which promises were made by a Liberal Prime Minister, and it was handed to the Commonwealth Government by six Liberal State Education Ministers, all unanimously requesting additional support for education from the Commonwealth Liberal Minister. Since then, the Commonwealth Government has refused to recognize its responsibilities in the matter. In fact, the conclusion of the survey with respect to recurrent education expenses was rejected outright by the Commonwealth Government, and we are still waiting, presumably, for some response from the Commonwealth Liberal Minister, the third with whom I have had to deal during the short time I have been a Minister. We are still awaiting a reply on the question of capital.

The member for Kavel may consider this a political matter now, simply because he is embarrassed by the actions of his Commonwealth colleagues, but I am sorry if he is embarrassed by that action. However, I assure him that even as recently as May of last year the standards set by the survey were unanimously agreed to as appropriate standards by all the State Ministers of Education. I understand that at that time they were all financial members of the Liberal Party or the Liberal and Country League or the Liberal-Country Party, or some such variation. If



he thinks that they were a party to a political document, I really think he should apologize to them. I know he would not apologize to me, but I believe that he has made an unfair accusation against the member for Torrens, in particular.

#### **GLENELG TREATMENT WORKS**

Mr. BECKER: Will the Minister of Works recommend that his department consider soundproofing offices at the Glenelg Sewage Treatment Works? Yesterday, when I visited these works, I was surprised at the considerable noise made by jet aircraft as they flew over the works. When these aircraft fly out to sea they must follow a certain flight path that takes them exactly over the treatment works. I believe that the Minister should consider having these offices soundproofed, in order to assist the staff with their work and prevent them from having to put up with this unnecessary noise.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: No.

#### **FLAMMABLE CLOTHING**

Mr. MATHWIN: Can the Minister of Labour and Industry say what is the Government's policy regarding the possibility of restricting the sale of flammable nightwear for children? Recently, a report in the local newspaper stated that this matter would be considered at the conference of State Ministers of Labour and Industry in July. That conference has now been held, but the report also stated that the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and the Standards Association of Australia were conducting tests to develop safety standards for this nightwear. Mr. Rafferty (Victorian Minister of Labour and Industry) also discussed statements by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons that Governments had failed to restrict the sale of flammable nightwear.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: True, the question was discussed at the Ministers' conference in Tasmania in July, and the Standards Association is studying the situation. However, until we obtain that report it is difficult to legislate to control the sale of flammable night clothes. I understand that, when the report is available, the New South Wales and Victorian Governments will draft legislation that other States will adopt.

#### **VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS**

Dr. TONKIN: Can the Minister of Roads and Transport say whether the rate of average annual increase in vehicle registration in South Australia is increasing, and, if it is, what action

is being taken to allow for this variation? This question is supplementary to one I asked recently concerning clearways, in reply to which the Minister said that the average annual increase in vehicle registration during the past five years was 4.1 per cent, excluding trailers, tractors, plant and equipment. Over the next 10 years an increase of 4.1 per cent a year (and I may add that that 10 years is the period of non-decision recommended by Dr. Breuning) would result in an increase in the number of registered motor vehicles in South Australia of 48 per cent. That would mean almost half as many cars on the road again as there are now, and, at this rate, the number of cars on our roads will be doubled before the end of the next decade. In his reply, the Minister said it was impossible to predict accurately how long the present freeways would remain as effective as they are today. I accept that statement, but surely the Minister must have some idea.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I think the honourable member asked and answered his question all in one hit. He asked whether the rate was increasing, and then referred to my reply of a week or two ago and said, "Yes, it is increasing." He quoted the rate, on which he did a little arithmetic, and worked out a theory all of his own, and then he went on to debate it. I am not clear what the honourable member is seeking.

Dr. Tonkin: The steps you are taking.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I have said so often in the House what steps the Government is currently taking in pursuance of its transport policy that I am amazed that the member for Bragg would once again—

Dr. Tonkin: The run around again!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The reason why members do not seem to cotton on to what the Government is doing is that they do not accept it. That was shown in the explanation the honourable member gave when he referred to 10 years of indecision.

Dr. Tonkin: No decision!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I do not know whether it was "indecision" or "no decision". The whole point of the question is that the honourable member obviously supports the previous Government's attitude that we should slice up Adelaide, including some of the area he represents, and cut a great swathe through it and build the monstrosities which have provided such a failure overseas and which America is currently trying to get rid of.

This is where the Government's policy and the policy of Opposition members are so completely opposite. The Government has said that in the 10-year period it will concentrate on upgrading the public transport system. The Government will also continue with the upgrading of arterial roads and grade separations with as much speed as is humanly possible. By these means, the Government believes that it will not be necessary (certainly, it will not be desirable) to destroy the peaceful living of the people of this State. If the honourable member wants to pursue that course, that is identical with the course his predecessors followed.

Mr. Mathwin: Don't we need freeways here?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: There are no freeways in the city of London, the population of which is about 8,000,000, so the member for Glenelg should not talk such drivel about 750,000 people not being able to move in Adelaide without freeways. He does not know what he is talking about.

#### ANDAMOOKA SCHOOL

Mr. GUNN: Has the Minister of Education a reply to my recent question about the Andamooka Special Rural School?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Work started on the proposed Andamooka Special Rural School about two weeks ago. It is expected that the school will be available early in 1972.

*At 4 o'clock, the bells having been rung:*

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

#### TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Mr. HOPGOOD (on notice):

1. How many accidents have occurred in the past 12 months on that part of the main South Road between Darlington and Black Road?

2. How many injuries and fatalities, respectively, have occurred as a result of these accidents?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The replies are as follows:

1. During the period from August 1, 1970, to July 31, 1971, 94 reported accidents occurred on the main South Road between Sturt Road, Darlington, and Black Road.

2. There were three fatalities and 26 accidents involving personal injury.

#### PRESBYTERIAN TRUSTS BILL

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to provide for the creation of a corporate body of trustees to hold and exercise proprietary rights in and in relation to property belonging to or held in trust for or in connection with the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

It relates to the Presbyterian Church of South Australia. The Presbyterian Church of South Australia is already affected by an Act of this Parliament passed in the year 1899 but the present Bill does not materially affect that Act. The present Bill deals with the real and personal property of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia and that property in relation to the church. The Bill also empowers and facilitates the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (of which the Presbyterian Church of South Australia is a part under a Federal constitution) to enter into union with other branches of the Christian church. The immediate proposal is for union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches. There are adequate safeguards for minority groups provided in the Bill where those in minority groups may not wish to enter into any such union that may be negotiated.

In South Australia there is a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, which is a court of the church but, being an unincorporated body, it does not hold property. There is also the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated, which is an incorporated body under the Associations Incorporation Act principally so that it may hold property. Over the years the incorporated General Assembly has become the repository for different kinds of property, some of which are subject to express trusts, some of which are subject to precatory wishes and some of which are not subject to any trusts. The provident fund of the church that provides for retiring and other benefits for clergymen of the church, and other properties that are ultimately controlled by the Church of Scotland, are examples of property in the name of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated which are subject to express trusts.

The conference centre of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia at Mount Lofty and the Dunbar Homes for the Aged are

examples of properties which are the subject of precatory wishes. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated holds many other properties, gifts and bequests within similar categories including many properties belonging to congregations of the church. Some of the difficulties facing the church without the legislation envisaged in this Bill are as follows:

- (a) With many of the properties of the church not being the subject of an express trust, if money is borrowed on the security of any one or more of those properties and for any reason the security for that particular borrowing proves to be inadequate then the other properties of the church could be prejudiced.
- (b) Throughout South Australia there are properties which have come to the Presbyterian Church of South Australia from the Free Church of Scotland (which was in existence in South Australia in the earlier days of the State) and from other Presbyterian groups within the State.
- (c) In a number of these cases the trustees have been dead for at least three generations. Some of them have been named "Smith". This has made it impossible to know or to trace who the last surviving trustee was or to find his descendants. As a result, it is impossible to transfer to and vest in the church the property of which it is rightfully the beneficiary.

In 1901 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia entered into a Federal Union with the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in each of the other States of Australia to form a Federal Union and to establish a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. But the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia is not empowered to negotiate for or enter into union with any other branch of the Christian Church. The stage has been reached where a proposed basis of union has been negotiated with the Methodist and Congregational Churches in Australia. To enable that union to be achieved it is necessary that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia be empowered by legislation to enter into the union if the church so desires. This Bill, then, *inter alia*, seeks to do the following things:

- (a) to establish a corporate body of trustees to which many of the real and personal properties of the church can be conveyed or transferred and in which those properties can be vested, and over which there can be oversight by an experienced body of trustees;
- (b) to give the Presbyterian Church in South Australia power to put its titles to property in order;
- (c) to prevent a borrowing against the security of one property of the church from jeopardizing assets held by the church under any trust; and
- (d) to set up a permanent incorporated body of trustees who will watch the church's titles and other property, inquire into the state of repair of its churches, see whether they are properly insured, and provide the church with a report year by year on the total holdings of the church thereby enabling proper stewardship to be exercised.

The preamble to the Bill is explanatory. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 contains the definitions necessary for the interpretation of the Bill. The "Moderator" is defined as the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia. Clause 3 empowers the General Assembly to resolve to establish the corporate body of trustees and to name that corporate body in the resolution. Clause 4 provides that the Moderator of the General Assembly shall give public notice of the resolution in the *Gazette* and one newspaper circulating throughout the State, such notice fixing the day on which the corporate body of trustees is to be constituted. Clause 5 provides for the incorporation of the corporate body of trustees and for the persons nominated in the resolution of the General Assembly to be the first members of that body. The clause also sets out the general powers of the corporate body.

Clause 6 provides for successors to the first members of the corporate body to be appointed in such manner and to hold office for such terms as are prescribed by the rules and regulations of the General Assembly. Clause 7 provides that where a person is a member of the corporate body by virtue of his office and ceases to hold that office his successor in that office becomes a member of the corporate body in the place of that person. Clause 8 enables real and personal property to be conveyed or

transferred to the corporate body. If the property is real property under the Real Property Act any transfer will be subject to any registered mortgages or encumbrances. If the property is real property not under the Real Property Act, if it is subject to any mortgage, charge or encumbrance it is not to be conveyed or transferred unless the corporate body agrees to undertake liability in respect of the mortgage, charge or encumbrance.

Subclause (3) allows trustees of property or a majority of these trustees, with the approval of the General Assembly, to convey or transfer property to the corporate body upon the trusts to which the property is subject. Subclause (4) enables property held in trust for or on behalf of or occupied or used by or for the purpose of any congregation or the Minister of a congregation to transfer that property to the corporate body with the consent of not less than two-thirds of the number of the members and adherents of that congregation voting in favour of that transfer. Clause 9 is a provision enabling property to be conveyed or transferred to the corporate body by the Moderator of the General Assembly where a trustee referred to in subclause (3) or (4) of clause 8 is unable or neglects or is unwilling to transfer property which is the subject of any trust for the church to the corporate body. There are safeguards, in that public notice of the intention to transfer must be given by the Moderator and 30 days must elapse before the transfer is made. Within that period anyone can take proceedings to restrain the Moderator from so conveying or transferring. If proceedings are taken, until they have been concluded no conveyance or transfer is allowed.

Clause 10 deals with the situation where property is held in trust for or on behalf of the church or any congregation of the church or for any special purpose in connection therewith and the trustees cannot be found, or have resigned or for any reason are not able to sign a transfer. In this event the Moderator may convey or transfer that property to the corporate body. Clause 11 provides that where there is any gift or donation or disposition of property to the church not having taken effect at the date of the incorporation of the corporate body, such gift or donation or disposition of property shall take effect after the incorporation of the corporate body as if it had been made to or in favour of the corporate body subject to any special trusts attaching to it. Clause 12 provides that if any property held by the corporate body has

any express trusts attaching to it it is to be held by the corporate body subject to those trusts. That section also empowers the corporate body to borrow on the security of any property subject to and in accordance with any trusts attaching to that property.

Clause 13 allows the corporate body, with the approval of the General Assembly, to transfer to trustees for a congregation land held by the corporate body for that congregation but only for the purpose of enabling the trustees to mortgage, charge or encumber the land and only while liability under that mortgage, charge or encumbrance continues. Clause 14 prevents dealing with any land held by trustees or the corporate body in trust for or on behalf of the church or any congregation of the church unless it is with the consent of the Moderator. But this does not restrict the rights of trustees who were empowered to mortgage or lease any land by a trust instrument affecting that land immediately before the incorporation of the corporate body although they must still give notice to the Moderator of their intention to mortgage or lease that land.

Clause 15 requires the Moderator of the General Assembly to keep a Register of Trustees of all property held by trustees for or on behalf of the church or any congregation of the church, and requires him to keep it up to date. That clause also provides that a certificate under the hand of the Moderator as to the trustees of any property, when produced in evidence, is *prima facie* evidence of the matters certified in that certificate and the register, when produced, is to be *prima facie* evidence of the matters stated therein. Clause 16 allows the Moderator to amend the Register of Trustees. Clause 17 provides for land in the names of the trustees to vest in new trustees upon the entry of names of the new trustees in the Register of Trustees, if that land is not under the Real Property Act. If the land is under the Real Property Act, provision is made for a transfer to be accepted for registration by the Registrar-General so that the new trustees may be registered on the title.

Clause 18 enables the General Assembly to make rules and regulations. Clause 19 sets out that the preceding clauses of the Bill do not affect Scotch College Adelaide, Presbyterian Girls College Incorporated and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Hospital Incorporated. Clause 20 and those following relate to the possible entering into union of the Presbyterian

Church with the Methodist and Congregational branches of the Christian Church. The provisions of the third schedule to the Act are relevant to these clauses. Clause 20 provides that if

- (a) all of the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Churches in the respective States of Australia have agreed to implement the provisions of the third schedule to this Bill;
- (b) legislation has been passed in each of those States enabling effect to be given to that third schedule; and
- (c) a notice has been published in the *Gazette* by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia to the effect that those respective assemblies have agreed to implement the provisions of the third schedule to this Bill and that such legislation has been passed,

then all interests in property held immediately before the publication of the notice by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia shall be held subject in all respects to the provisions of that third schedule.

Subclause (2) of that clause makes provision for any continuing congregation in any continuing Presbyterian Church within South Australia if there should be any such continuing congregation and any such continuing church. Subclause (4) of that clause provides that, for the purposes of giving full effect to the third schedule and to the agreement referred to in paragraph (a) of subclause (1) of this clause, that schedule is to have effect as if expressly enacted by this Bill. Clause 21 provides that judicial notice of the signature of the Moderator is to be taken by courts and persons acting judicially. Clause 22 also relates to property and provides that certain property given or bequeathed after the date of the notice of the Moderator shall be deemed to be an interest in property to which clause 20 applies.

Clause 23 is a machinery provision preventing any property passing to a substituted beneficiary where that property would have passed to such a beneficiary only by virtue of the enactment of that section. It does not otherwise interfere with the rights of substituted beneficiaries, and sets down a scheme under which their rights are protected. Clause 24 enables the Moderator to appoint another

trustee to take the place of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated if it should cease to exist. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated is, in many instances, a trustee only of certain properties and if it goes out of existence then, obviously, there will have to be another trustee to hold that property upon the same trusts.

The first and second schedules to the Act are merely related to trustees and the Presbyterian Register of Trustees, and are forms only. The third schedule sets out the basis upon which a vote within the Presbyterian Church may be taken on the question of union with any denomination or branch of the Christian Church. It is not limited to the Methodist and Congregational branches. The schedule is almost identical with provisions in the Acts of the Parliaments of the other States of Australia, and unless it is passed in the form in which it appears in this Bill it will seriously prejudice the actions proposed by the Presbyterian Churches throughout Australia. Basically, it provides for a vote on the question of union to be taken within the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, within the various State General Assemblies, and within the presbyteries (which are smaller geographical areas within States) and for votes to be made by members of congregations throughout Australia. There are adequate protections for the rights of minority groups who may not wish to participate in any church which may result from any vote in favour of union. This Bill, which is in the nature of a hybrid Bill, will be referred for consideration to a Select Committee of this House.

Mr. WARDLE (Murray): I support the Bill, but I regret that more time could not be allowed for me to peruse it in greater detail. I have only been able to follow the Attorney-General's second reading explanation as he read it. However, I have discussed the matter previously with an officer of the Presbyterian Church who was able to outline to me just what the church had in mind, what difficulties it faced, and what help legislation of this kind would be to it. I was aware that a Bill of this type would be introduced by the Government. Obviously the Bill will be of great advantage to the church as it provides the means whereby the church will be able to reorganize many aspects of property into a situation where it will be of much more benefit to the church as a whole. Moreover, this denomination will be enabled to enter into

an agreement with two other denominations. Having been responsible over past years for trust deeds of a church and knowing the difficulties created by old trust deeds, where the trustees have died and it is impossible to trace relatives, let alone trustees on trusts, I can see the distinct advantages to the Presbyterian Church in this arrangement.

In many respects, it is a matter of delight to know that the Presbyterian Church is requiring enabling powers so that it can have closer association with the Methodist and Congregational Churches in this State; probably one united church will be formed. I do not think anyone would disagree with the forming into one combined group and one organization of these three Protestant denominations. This is an example of the ecumenical movement of the Christian Church throughout the world, and in coming years we will see much more of this type of thing. Over recent years, throughout the world there have been pleasing signs of greater co-operation, even if many aspects of organizational independence still remain in the Christian Church. Although I am not sure whether there is a great need to bring organizations under one organization, I know there is a need for greater co-operation.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General): The honourable member has said, I think by way of complaint, that it is a pity that more time has not been available to enable him to study the provisions of the Bill. The Government has not the slightest desire to push through this Bill, if a member believes he needs more time to study it. However, we have acceded to the urgent request of members of the Presbyterian Church, who have stressed the importance of this Bill's being passed as soon as possible for the domestic purposes of that church. To that end, the Parliamentary Counsel has put aside other matters of Government business, concentrating on getting this Bill through. The Government has concentrated on getting the Bill before the House at the earliest possible moment. I point out that the Bill will go before a Select Committee where it will be fully investigated, the honourable member having ample opportunity to consider its contents. For that reason, it seems to me desirable that the second reading should be passed today and that the matter should be referred to a Select Committee.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: I think that the honourable member agrees with you.

The Hon. L. J. KING: He did say that it was a pity that there was not more time to

study the Bill. I make clear that, if any member wants more time to study the Bill, I will reluctantly accede to a request for an adjournment.

Dr. Eastick: It would have been easier if you had made your second reading explanation before the weekend.

The Hon. L. J. KING: There is next week when Parliament will not be sitting during which it can be considered.

Dr. Eastick: I meant last weekend.

The Hon. L. J. KING: It would have been better still, from the point of view of the Presbyterian Church and everyone else, if we could have introduced it a fortnight ago, but every effort has been made to get the Bill before the House at the earliest possible moment. If there is any complaint that the Bill has been pushed through without adequate time for consideration, I will reluctantly accede to a request for an adjournment.

Mr. Wardle: I didn't ask for that.

The Hon. L. J. KING: If the honourable member did not ask for it, I do not see his point in complaining that there was inadequate time to look at the Bill. I simply want to say that there is no suggestion by the Government that this Bill should be pushed through, if any member is not pleased about that course being taken. However, as I have said, the measure must be referred to a Select Committee, and it seems desirable that it should be so referred at this stage.

Bill read a second time and referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon. L. J. King, Messrs. Hopgood, Rodda, Wardle, and Wright; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on September 28.

### LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL (RURAL LAND)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 12. Page 764.)

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): One wonders how many favourable announcements the Government can make on an action so unfavourable to those concerned with the Bill. On at least two occasions the Treasurer has announced that he is helping those in rural industries by reducing land tax. In the first instance, he intended, so he said, to implement a minimal reduction of land tax applied to rural areas. He arrogantly refused to listen to the advice given to him from this side.

He gave what he said was a fair random sample testing of the properties concerned, to bolster his case and defend himself against the Opposition attack.

After a few months, he has introduced a Bill which, like so many other of his actions, thoroughly vindicates the Opposition attitude, because it shows we were right and the Treasurer was wrong. We know of certain instances of this, and I call the present Administration a Government of promotion and revocation. It promotes matters to the House and to the public, and then continually revokes these promotions. Last week we had the Treasurer advocating the Dartmouth dam, much to the laughter of the people of Australia. This week we have the Government doing what we said it would have to do. No wonder the Treasurer is not in the Chamber at present. I shall refer to what was said when the previous fake Bill was introduced for the so-called reason of reducing land tax in rural areas.

We on this side know of the plight of the rural industry and we speak from much experience as a Party that has governed on a non-sectional basis for many years. It is a Party that has industrialized South Australia, despite the smile on the face of the member for Stuart, whose district has received much more assistance from previous Liberal and Country League Governments than has any other district in South Australia. The only thanks we have got from the honourable member is by way of a continual attack on rural industries.

Mr. Keneally: I must have—

Mr. HALL: The honourable member is out of order in interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. HALL: Over the long years of promotion of industrial development in this State, primary industry had its hey-day and was the basis on which secondary industry was allowed to develop and could develop. However, now that secondary industry has become successful under L.C.L. leadership in South Australia, the primary industries are encountering severe difficulty. This has been referred to in this House many times, and perhaps the highlight and apex of its being referred to was that we on this side moved a censure motion on the Government for its failure to recognize the rural problem. Last year, when the Treasurer introduced the inadequate

measure to give minimal relief to those paying land tax, I replied to him in this House on November 10, stating:

I have no hesitation in saying that many valuations, because of the present difficulty that exists in this matter, will be wrong the day they are proclaimed or gazetted. In addition, the Government is moving ineffectually to help rural landowners in regard to the rural land tax problem in the present difficult times, and I am greatly concerned that the Government has been so niggardly in this matter.

The Treasurer wanted \$1,000,000 from the rural areas, even though people were beginning to walk off the land and the indebtedness of many properties in South Australia was increasing each year. This Government still intends to add to the debt and to drive people off the land.

Mr. Venning: What is he doing with the \$1,000,000?

Mr. HALL: That is a good question. I know one thing he will do with it: he will exempt the new hotel in Victoria Square from paying land tax to the extent of \$16,000 a year and, over the whole term of the 99-year lease that he is offering, this exemption will be worth more than \$1,500,000 to those who have so much surplus funds that they are looking for further investment.

Mr. Hopgood: How much land tax is that land paying now?

Mr. HALL: The member for Mawson has interjected inadequately again. The chip on his shoulder is weighing him down in the back bench.

Mr. Hopgood: But the interjection wasn't answered.

Mr. HALL: The Government will take \$1,000,000 from the land that will not yield that type of capital taxation, a taxation completely unrelated to production, but this Government does not care. The Treasurer said that he would take \$1,000,000. We told him that the values were wrong and unrelated to fact. However, he introduced a so-called unbiased random sample that was so biased that even his own supporters did not believe it, but they took no notice of it. They blindly support, from the back bench, an ineffectual front bench that can only have present, during this debate, a junior Minister. Government members will see what is happening if they read the second reading explanation of the Bill. The Treasurer has had to say he was wrong. Why did the Government members support him in the first place?

Dr. Tonkin: Because they had to.

Mr. HALL: I agree with the member for Bragg: members opposite have no choice. The Treasurer, in his explanation, stated:

Since making the 1970 assessment, the Government has viewed with growing concern the steady decline in the value of primary-producing land.

Why did not the Government view that steady decline with concern previously?

Mr. Evans: Because it has no concern for rural industry.

Mr. HALL: The Treasurer also stated:

Since that date it has also become clear that the sales on which the assessment was based did not, in fact, fully reflect the drop which had already occurred in the profitability of rural production.

All the Treasurer is interested in doing is to put \$750,000 into King William Street to buy a plaster cast replica of someone else's building with rural land taxes. The Treasurer continued:

It has been estimated that rural land sales over the past 12 months reveal an average drop in value of about 20 per cent.

I assure the Treasurer that Opposition members will demonstrate to him that his assumption is wrong and inadequate.

Mr. Payne: Why not demonstrate to your Canberra colleagues?

Mr. HALL: Once again the honourable member is dragging in someone else. It is this irresponsible Government that does not want to take the responsibility for this Bill, and I do not blame the honourable member for that. If he has the courage to disagree with the front bench, I would certainly promote him to it. The Treasurer continued:

The unfortunate result is that, under the Act as it now stands, the 1971-1972 land tax must be based on an assessment which, in effect, now grossly overvalues much of the primary-producing land.

It has happened since last November when the Government took the blinkers off. This is not the real reason for the Treasurer moving this way: that is revealed later. It is not compassion for the rural areas, but the fact that he was caught up with his statement in November when he said that he would limit his take from the rural areas to \$1,000,000. He found out that the rules he laid down would take more than \$1,000,000 as we said they would.

Mr. Venning: Why didn't he alter the rate? He won't listen.

Mr. HALL: Of course the Treasurer would not listen. I am sure the member for Rocky River knows how blind the Government is to the rural problem. However, the Treasurer came out with the truth of the matter when he said:

The land tax revenue to be derived from rural land in 1971-1972 could as a result be expected to be \$1,000,000 or thereabouts, which was the amount expected by the Government when the 1970 assessment was undertaken and newly reduced rates set.

The amount the Government was going to get was over \$1,000,000. This statement proved an embarrassment, because the Treasurer could be caught up by his previous undertaking that he would take \$1,000,000, so he has had to alter the rules he made. We have become accustomed to the Government's changing its mind time after time when it adopts every stunt there is in the book. I presume it could be said that the Government represents everyone: it represents the trolley bus people, the steam train people, and even the freeway people.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Leader is out of order in referring to other organizations.

Mr. HALL: When one speaks about the various inadequacies of this Government one can be led astray because they are so wide and varied and represent the total activity in the Government's first 18 months in office. The rural industry is always at the end of the road and cannot pass on its costs. It depends on subsidies, which are still inadequate to maintain any primary industries in their mode of operation today.

Mr. Keneally: If you are looking at rural industries why not complain to your Commonwealth colleagues?

Mr. HALL: Obviously the honourable member is either ignorant or biased. I do not believe he is ignorant, but he is biased, because of the political philosophy he has adopted that is totally against anyone who works for himself. That is what he does not like—the free primary producer working on his property. He would like to see collective farms. The policy speech of the Deputy Premier given at Gawler may amuse the member for Mawson, but if he studied that speech carefully he would realize in which direction this policy would take us.

Mr. Coumbe: He wants to see a commune!

Mr. HALL: Perhaps he should have gone to China, and he would have come home full of praise for the system used in that country!



The member for Stuart decries subsidies for primary industries. He knows that, in any highly industrialized country in which there is a successful policy of full employment, it is impossible to contain prices in a range to enable primary industries generally to continue to stand on their own feet.

Mr. Hopgood: Particularly if the Commonwealth Government is opposed to price control.

Mr. HALL: Individual industries may sometimes find lucrative and continuing markets but, generally, given the situation of a successful expanding secondary industry based on a full employment situation there is no alternative but to spread the nation's income through a properly regulated subsidy system for rural industries. Every developing country in the world has found this system necessary, particularly the United States of America and Japan. It is no use the member for Stuart, in one State Parliament in Australia, decrying that which now supports these people who have provided the early base for the development of Australia. In this State it is obvious that the Government does not care about primary industry, because it is unsympathetic and philosophically biased against it.

I should think that killing charges at the abattoir indicate what happens when secondary and primary industries meet in one processing sphere: killing charges today for mutton are about equal to what the producer obtains for the mutton. That situation illustrates the cost effect of secondary industry development on the primary industry. The primary industry must pay as much as its produce is worth to have it treated: not to have it sent to the consumer, but treated in order to put it in a retail form. Yet Government members decry the subsidy system! If the honourable member's views were transposed into the sphere of the Commonwealth Labor movement we would find in Australia a tremendously dangerous situation for all primary industry. This subject has been ventilated many times in South Australia.

At the last election my Party went to the poll with a policy of reducing land tax in rural industries by about 80 per cent. Since then the situation has worsened, and we have adopted a policy of complete abolition, a policy similar to that adopted by other States. In Victoria and New South Wales no land tax is imposed on rural land. These are the two major Commonwealth States that set the standard for the Grants Commission, but they do not impose rural land tax. It is fatuous for the Treasurer to suggest that he has to maintain

this tax in South Australia in order to apply to the Grants Commission. This he does not have to do, because these two States which set the standard do not impose this tax. Therefore, this tax is imposed because the Government does not believe in helping rural industry if it can avoid helping it. The Government will do everything it can to tax and take from them. This has been demonstrated, as the member for Elizabeth knows, over the years in relation to financial provisions and taxes on rural industries, particularly the Bill on transport, which was another control to be placed on the rural sector.

The rural industry in South Australia is confused and does not know how to survive without wise Government leadership, but the leadership it is getting now is one of still more taxation. Although, unfortunately, it is not open for me to amend the Bill in the way I should like to amend it, I support it because it will reduce taxation from the level we said it would reach to the level the Treasurer said he wanted to impose. On that basis, I must support the Bill. I had intended to move an amendment to section 11 of the principal Act by asking the House for an instruction so that I could move for the total exemption of tax on rural lands. This I find is not procedurally possible, as it would be a direct negative of the Bill. Therefore, I gave notice during Question Time today that I would introduce a separate Bill to amend section 11 of the Land Tax Act to give the House a chance to approve the abolition of rural land tax.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader must not refer to some other Bill now. The Leader is dealing with the second reading of the Bill before the House.

Mr. HALL: The Bill does not yet exist.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Therefore, no comments can be made regarding it.

Mr. HALL: I'd finished anyway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader's remarks are out of order.

Mr. HALL: I appeal to the Government to have another change of heart. If the Government is genuine in saying that some factors are now seen that were not seen by it in November, perhaps next year (a year late) it will see things that it should see now. If that is the case, I can only appeal to the Government to keep a constant surveillance of the rural industries and to assess the applications made for rural reconstruction so that it can see the health or otherwise of those industries

and keep in mind the impact of rural taxation on them. The Government must concede that \$1,000,000, if offered by the State Government as separate assistance to rural industries each year, would be significant. If it was seen as an annual sum of \$1,000,000 offered to a depressed industry, it would be welcome and be of importance.

On the other hand, we refuse to lift taxation by \$1,000,000. May I remind members that the text of the Bill is such that the general increase in land taxation will raise the income to the Government on non-rural land by well over the \$1,000,000 we are asking to be taken off rural land. In other words, if the Government accedes to our request to exempt rural land, the total return to the Government from land tax in South Australia would still be greater this year than it has ever been before. That is the thing the Government should remember when considering the Opposition's request to follow the type of policy that has been found necessary by other State Governments in Australia. I put it to the Government: does the Western Australian Government (another Labor Government, and one which, heaven forbid, I would on very few occasions hold up as an example) impose this type of land tax?

Mr. Gunn: No.

Mr. HALL: Of course not. The South Australian Government is the one Government out of step in the whole of Australia in this field. It continues its refusal to recognize the problem. However, for the reasons I have enunciated, I support the Bill, with the hope that members will support my amending Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled discussion on some other Bill to be out of order.

Mr. HALL: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker; I forgot, and I apologize.

Mr. Clark: Isn't that funny? Isn't that witty?

Mr. HALL: I hope that the Government will keep the problem in mind and will see fit to reduce this taxation to a minimal level as soon as possible.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): The member for Elizabeth cannot understand why the Opposition supports this Bill with a considerable lack of enthusiasm.

Mr. Clark: Where did you dream that up?

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Perhaps I did not hear the honourable member's interjection

clearly. The honourable member chided the Leader of the Opposition for saying that land tax—

Mr. Clark: I think he is a complete idiot.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I doubt whether the sensitivities of any Opposition member would be greatly disturbed by that kind of remark.

Mr. Clark: There are many who agree with me.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: No doubt many people would say the same thing about the Government back-benchers. Be that as it may, I do support the Bill with little enthusiasm because it is a token acknowledgement by the Treasurer that he has made another mistake. The Bill highlights the fact that the Treasurer is continually climbing down on things he said during the last session of Parliament. The fact is that the Treasurer said he would raise \$1,000,000 in rural land tax but, as a result of the assessment, over \$1,000,000 was raised in land tax, so he has introduced this Bill. I think members of the public at large in South Australia are coming to realize the position in our rural areas at present. They do not have to rely on statements made by the Opposition, because articles published in the press frequently highlight what is happening in rural areas. In this respect recent articles by Mr. Stewart Cockburn come to mind. Some people have suggested that those articles are exaggerated, but I am sure that they are an understatement in many cases. I say that not only from my own first-hand knowledge but also from statements made by other members.

The public is being educated on aspects of the rural crisis, and there is a growing awareness in the metropolitan area that something must be done if we are not to alter completely the whole face of rural industry in South Australia. The Government should not fear the repercussions in the areas of its electoral strength, if it is prepared to do something to help people in the rural areas. As has been said many times before, great difficulty is being experienced as a result of the fixed charges and capital taxes that primary producers must bear, such as council rates, water rates, land tax, and succession duties. I know of some cases where primary producers have to pay council rates, for instance, to enable work to be carried out on roads used by many people other than those living in the district. They must pay council rates of about \$1 a sheep a year. Anyone who knows anything about the

returns from sheep nowadays knows that this is an impossible charge from the point of view of remaining profitable. We know that the effect of levying succession duties on farming units—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! References to other forms of taxation are out of order.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I was referring to land tax as a capital tax and comparing it with other similar forms of taxation. The tax to which I was referring, on the death of an owner, makes many rural properties completely unworkable. The former assessment was waived in July, 1970, the present assessment to continue for the ensuing five years. On March 10 last, the Treasurer said that the Government had provided that there should be a reassessment to take account of any recent falls in land values, and this allowed the Valuer-General to take into account falls in values since July 1, 1970, even though that was the date on which the assessment was to be made. I do not know precisely what is the legality of that situation, but the Treasurer had apparently given the Valuer-General the nod to ignore the terms of the Act. Nevertheless, as a result of that valuation, there was a significant increase in land tax returns over and above what the Treasurer had promised would be returned to the Treasury.

The policy of those on this side of the House has been significantly more beneficial to rural producers than has anything that the Government has ever provided, because in many cases we have a first-hand knowledge of the position concerning rural industries. Before the last election, we indicated that there would be an overall reduction of 80 per cent, to return less than a third of what the Government now intends to return to the Treasury by way of land tax, and that was well before the more recent decline occurred in the rural position. It is well known, even by Government members, that this tax, in respect of rural lands, has either been abolished or is being abolished in the other States, so I see no argument for the Government's retaining this tax, despite the Treasurer's statement that, concerning any approach to the Grants Commission, we must tax as heavily as do the other States. The Treasurer said we did not gain any revenue from poker machines, but I doubt that this would be a consideration concerning any approach to the Grants Commission. It never

seemed to weigh heavily in the mind of a former Treasurer (Sir Thomas Playford), when he was applying to the Grants Commission, that we should tax as heavily as the other States taxed.

In fact, Sir Thomas could see considerable benefits through keeping our level of taxation below that of other States and, as a consequence, South Australia enjoyed a measure of prosperity that has never been known under a Labor Government. I believe there is a strong case for following the lead given by the other States and abolishing this tax on rural lands. The member for Mawson referred to the effects of farming on the ecology: if we are not going to return to the jungle and hang by our own tails, living as savages, we must eat and, therefore, farm the countryside. We occasionally hear this sort of philosophical nonsense from the member for Mawson. The member for Stuart said that, if primary producers had to accept subsidies, it was time we examined the rural industries: if it were not for tariff protection (protection from competition), many trade unionists and others employed in secondary industry certainly would not enjoy the standard of living that they enjoy at present.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with land tax, and the honourable member must relate his remarks to the Bill under discussion.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Referring to the contribution that rural producers make to the national economy, I cannot help thinking of some remarks made by the member for Florey, whose theory is that the recent 6 per cent wage rise was not sufficient and who said that trade unionists and workers generally were not getting their share of the national cake.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must point out to the honourable member that this is not an open debate: it is the second reading debate on a Bill dealing with land tax as it affects rural industry. Unless the honourable member can link his remarks to the Bill, he will be out of order.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: I believe that the rural producers are not getting their share of the national cake. We are dealing with a capital tax based on the assessed value of rural property. Let us look in round figures at the sort of capital needed to return to a primary producer engaged in mixed farming \$5,000 a year, which is well below anything that most professional people receive these days; indeed, many people engaged in various

branches of industry receive an income of \$5,000 a year. Taking one of our average Mid-North areas, I point out that, to have a return of \$5,000 a year, a person engaged in mixed farming today would require about 1,200 acres, 300-400 acres of which he would crop each year on the rotation basis. He would obtain a wheat quota of 4bush. an acre (a good average), probably receiving \$1.40 a bushel or, say, \$1,700 a year. He would probably run about 500 sheep and, if he were running ewes, which are probably as profitable as anything at present, his return from wool could be \$3 a sheep, totalling \$1,500. He might, if it involved 100 per cent lambing, receive \$4 a lamb, or a total of \$2,000.

If we add these figures, we get a total income of just over \$5,000, not allowing for any depreciation figure in respect of sheep replacement costs, or for wear and tear of machinery. What sort of capital investment is required for this return of \$5,000? I am referring to the sort of people whom this Government is bent on taxing. At about \$30 an acre, the property would cost, say, \$30,000, plus a tractor costing about \$2,000, a combine about \$1,000, a header \$2,000, in addition to other items of machinery, including harrows, etc., probably a large vehicle, and sheds and yards, etc. He would require a capital investment of at least \$50,000, on which capital taxes would be charged, to earn a gross income of \$5,000 a year. When we are assessing the effect on rural producers of these taxation measures, we must look at the situation of people who earn comparable incomes. Other people who earn a similar income have an assured income and enjoy the benefits of annual leave, workmen's compensation, superannuation and so on, which are denied rural producers, and have a capital investment to secure their job of practically nothing—perhaps a couple of fountain pens a year.

We hear the word "priorities" bandied about often in this place. In assessing priorities and the level at which we should tax, all the matters to which I have referred should be considered. Rural producers are not assured of an income from year to year; they are not assured of sick leave benefits, for instance; they have high capital investments; and they are subject to high levels of capital taxation. If these figures are considered dispassionately, one concludes that there must be considerable alleviation not only in this tax, which is not the largest but is of some moment in many cases, but in all capital taxes, which must be

reconsidered and reassessed. Therefore, it should be clearly apparent to the member for Elizabeth and others why the Opposition is not enthusiastic in supporting the Bill. We consider that we can put not only a strong case but an unanswerable case for the absolute abolition of this form of tax on rural producers. With those sentiments, I support the Bill.

Mr. CARNIE (Flinders): Like the member for Kavel, I support the Bill without much enthusiasm. With most members on this side, I believe that it provides too little too late. It is another example of backing down by the Government under pressure from the Opposition, and of the Government's failure to administer properly the affairs of the State. From the time the new valuations began to be received by farmers, Opposition members started questioning the Government about the matter. Throughout all this questioning by most rural members, the Treasurer maintained that the valuations fixed were fair and, more especially, that they did not impose hardship. As the Leader said earlier, one of the most significant things the Treasurer said (and this is probably one of the main reasons why the Bill has been presented, because he made a firm statement with which he is stuck) was in reply to a question by the member for Murray about how much the Government expected to obtain from rural land tax, when the Treasurer said:

The present land tax revenue from rural land is about \$1,100,000 a year. It is expected that the return to the Government under the new arrangements next year may be about \$1,000,000, or possibly a little less.

That was the first occasion on which he stated a specific figure, and that is the figure with which he is now stuck. As I found it difficult to believe that that figure would be correct, I asked the Treasurer in what areas land tax assessments had been reduced. In explaining that question, I said that from experience in my area and from speaking to other rural members I had found that most valuations and land tax payable had increased. A week or two later, in the absence of the Treasurer, the Minister of Works replied; I do not intend to read that reply in full, and it did not answer the question. In effect, it was that if the Government had not given a 40 per cent rebate on primary producing land it would have collected \$1,550,000 but, because it had given a rebate on that land, the return would be reduced to about \$1,000,000, as the Treasurer had said earlier. However, I was not told in what areas this reduction had taken place.

During this time, when the Opposition was fulfilling its function, the Treasurer showed a bland indifference to the problems of farmers throughout the State. So the furore grew and the appeals flooded in. Country members were deluged with representations from farmers in their areas to see what could be done about this increase in capital taxation. As all members know, well-attended meetings were held throughout the State about this. Still the Treasurer continued to live the lie that land tax in rural areas had been reduced, as he had promised at the farmers' march in July, 1970, and as his Deputy had promised when he delivered Labor's rural policy speech in May last year.

Land tax is not the only problem associated with the new unimproved valuations sent out last year, although certainly it is bad enough in most instances: the unimproved valuations affect other forms of capital tax such as water rates, and council rates in many areas. As the member for Kavel said, these are capital taxes, bearing no relationship to the profitability of the unit. In one way, land tax is a little worse than some of the other taxes in that it is based on a sliding scale. As an example, I have some valuations from the Valuation Department as follows: in one case the unimproved value was increased by 50 per cent and the land tax payable was increased  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times; in another case, the valuation was increased by almost three times and the tax payable increased by more than four times; in another case the valuation was doubled and the tax payable increased three times; and the classic case I have is of an unimproved valuation that was increased five times, the tax payable on the property increasing 20 times. This is the result of the sliding scale principle used in rating.

I have been referring to a list of 33 valuations in seven areas of the State. Only in six cases on that list was there a reduction in land tax payable. However, the Treasurer maintained that land tax throughout the State would be reduced by about 10 per cent. This callous and unfeeling attitude of the Government finally forced the Leader to move a censure motion, in explaining which he said:

This motion should be unnecessary. Long ago the Government should have recognized the problem that I now define.

The Government should have recognized this problem previously. It has recognized it at last, but not of its own volition: the pressure from members on this side and from all over the State finally forced the Government to do something about the matter.

The censure motion brought to light how the Government was deluding the people, because the Treasurer, in replying to the Leader of the Opposition, cited many values (I think about 72, covering about eight or nine parts of the State), calling them random statistical samples. He said they were examples of how land tax had been reduced, and he tried to justify the figure of \$1,000,000 or a little less that he insisted on.

I suppose that most other honourable members did as I did, namely, took particular note of the examples that the Treasurer gave for their districts. An example of how the Treasurer deluded the public was that the Port Lincoln cases cited were of values between \$3,900 and \$4,220. Anyone who knows farming knows that these values were obviously not for farming units: they could not possibly have been. The figures that the Treasurer gave on this occasion were obviously unimproved values of town properties, normal building blocks, as \$3,000 would be about an average value for such blocks in Port Lincoln. Also, in the same reply, the Treasurer said that there were 48,000 rural assessments. On the primary-producing side in this State, there are 29,000 primary-producing properties, not 48,000 as stated by the Treasurer. These other 19,000 are building blocks and home properties within the towns, and the rebate on this tax and the subject of the Leader's censure motion did not apply to those. It is deluding everyone to drag this in and quote it as a figure.

Of the 29,000 primary-producing properties in South Australia, ultimately there were 13,000 appeals against the valuation. The Treasurer read out these figures, apparently in good faith, but he is not a stupid man, and I wonder why he sometimes persists in trying to give the impression that he is, because he could not possibly have expected people to believe this. He still stated throughout that the tax collected would be less than \$1,000,000. On this occasion I obtained some random samples from the Valuation Department. I did not get as many as the Treasurer got. As I have said, I think I have about 34 compared with the 72 given by the Treasurer. I added the tax payable under the 1965 unimproved valuation and compared it with the abated tax under the 1970 unimproved valuation, and that showed an increase of 69 per cent, which is vastly different from the decrease of 10 per cent that the Treasurer tried to say was what applied in this case.

I am the first to admit that, in taking random samples, one will get a variation. I should

not like to say how much the variation would be, but there would be some. However, I certainly will not accept a 79 per cent variation, so one of us, or one of the sets of figures, was obviously wrong. From the figures I took it seemed that, far from the tax payable being reduced to \$1,000,000 or less, it would, in fact, have increased to between \$1,600,000 and \$1,800,000. It seems now, from the Treasurer's action in introducing this Bill and from the admissions he made in explaining it, that my figures are a little more accurate than are his. I find this difficult to understand, because I have not the access to the information that the Treasurer has. He knew the valuations, or certainly could have obtained them. He knew which of those valuations applied to primary-producing properties and were, therefore, subject to the rebate as given in the Bill that we passed last year. It is not a difficult arithmetical exercise to work out how much tax would be collected from primary-producing properties in this State, but I wonder whether the Treasurer ever took the trouble to do this, or whether he continued with the same story, thinking that all the people would believe it and accept it.

As the Treasurer had access to all this information and should have done his homework a little more on this, it is hard to understand his insistence on the figure that is now known and admitted to be wrong. The Opposition knew the situation and the problem and, as a responsible Opposition, we pointed this out to the Government. It was our right and, indeed, our duty to do this. It is a responsibility of an Opposition to point out to any Government where the Opposition thinks it is wrong, and in this case we have been proved right. In the debate on the land tax measure introduced last November I said that the Government had not given one inch on this vital issue, despite the promise made on at least two occasions by the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier. The Government has now given a little, perhaps half an inch, but it has not given willingly. It has given in only in response to pressures from the Opposition and the farmers throughout this State, the 13,000 of them, in fact.

The Leader of the Opposition, in speaking to this Bill a few moments ago, said that he had intended to move an amendment to abolish this tax on rural properties but that, because of procedural difficulties, he could not do this. This is a great pity, because it should be done. We should do what Victoria and New South

Wales have done and abolish this tax as it affects primary-producing properties. As one honourable member has said, Western Australia has never imposed it. Certainly, this nullifies the Treasurer's argument that he must impose capital taxation so that he can go to the Grants Commission. The Leader of the Opposition has shown that this is not so, because the two States taken as the criteria for application to the Grants Commission do not impose this tax. The Treasurer now says that his Government will give relief to farmers in the area of capital taxation. He will now try to promote the fact that an A.L.P. Government has done this. I hope he does not delude himself too much on this, because the farmers and the rural community in general will know who was responsible for the introduction of this Bill: it was the Opposition, and the constant pressure that it brought on the Government.

Mr. Gunn: What do you think the member for Stuart—

Mr. CARNIE: I am sorry that the member for Stuart is not in the Chamber. I hope he intends to speak on this Bill. We find it a great relief to hear the words of wisdom that he offers to the farmers throughout the State!

Mr. Mathwin: He's reading up on collective farming at present.

Mr. CARNIE: I would not doubt that. He is solving the problems of the farmers in his own mind, but I do not think he has convinced any farmers yet. This Bill will give some relief in an area in which it is badly needed. It is not as much as it should be, and that is why I said that I supported the Bill without much enthusiasm. I assure the Government that, when the new valuations are issued, Opposition members will watch closely to ensure that the valuations this time will bear some relation to the true land values that now apply. I support the Bill.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I, too, support the Bill very reluctantly, and I agree with the remarks made by my Leader and other Opposition members. We are discussing a Bill that will bring about a revaluation of the unimproved land values in the rural areas of this State. Is this to be a computer exercise in which valuations will be fed into a computer with an over-the-board reduction of 30 per cent or 40 per cent or whatever the figure is, but with none of the existing anomalies being removed? This problem has caused much concern to my constituents and to other primary producers in the State. If the Government intends to carry

out a fair and true valuation, it will take more than the few months that the Government has allocated for the new valuations to operate. The valuation that was considered by the House a few months ago was completely unrealistic, but when Opposition members pointed out the effect it would have on primary producers and the rural industry the Government ridiculed us. This applied particularly to the Treasurer, who, in his typical arrogant fashion, refused to face reality. Even after members had approached him and pointed out the many anomalies, he went on his merry way, and it was not until the primary producers of this State appealed in such large numbers and cluttered up the operations of the Valuation Department that the Government saw reason. I warn the Government now that the same thing will happen again if it does not see reason and come out with a responsible valuation. Concern has already been expressed to me by representatives of the Stockowners Association and the United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated—

Mr. Langley: As well as members of the Country Party!

Mr. GUNN: The honourable member should leave that Party to the member for Chaffey, who is in this place because of the actions of the Country Party: he will not be here much longer, as that Party will desert him at the next election and a more appropriate member will be returned. The previous assessment was most unfair and it has had an unfortunate effect on the rural industry. There have been few sales of land throughout country areas, so it has been difficult to find out how much the value of land has fallen. However, in every area in my district it would have fallen by at least 50 per cent.

A property of 9,400 acres at Streaky Bay was sold for \$21,000. A few months ago it was put under the hammer but not one bid was received. Three months ago this property was valued for succession duties at nearly \$30,000, and this illustrates the extent to which land values have fallen. Perhaps a better example is a property of about 2,200 acres in the same area that was sold for \$25,000. In 1968, when the owner wished to introduce another person into the ownership of the property, it was valued by the Commonwealth Valuation Department at \$43,000. That was about a 50 per cent reduction because included in the sale was 500 acres of crop. Also, the property had a reasonable wheat quota for the land held. That is another illustration of the tremendous fall in land

values. Unfortunately, many people who wish to sell their properties find that it is impossible to get a bid for them, and for this reason it is difficult to convince the Valuation Department and the Government of the prevailing situation. If the Government merely carries out a computer exercise (which I expect it will), it will be faced with many problems. I think I need only say that the Party of which I am proud to be a member has once again been vindicated. We pointed out many times that this was an obnoxious tax.

Mr. Langley: Why didn't you do something about it when you were in Government?

Mr. GUNN: I refer the honourable member to what the Hon. Glen Pearson said.

Mr. Hopgood: Tell us what he did.

Mr. GUNN: What has this Government done? It is giving the assets of this State to wealthy millionaires, and anyone else who comes along, in the most irresponsible way. If the honourable member has not read the document issued by the Treasurer and hawked around Asia, he should do so and digest it before interrupting. I refer the member for Unley to what the Hon. G. G. Pearson said in his last Budget speech on September 4, 1969, when he acknowledged the difficulties of the State's primary industries resulting from generally falling prices and rising costs. He went on to say:

For this reason, the Government is giving serious thought to farmers' problems, particularly in regard to land tax, and action will be taken to amend the Land Tax Act during the next year to afford substantial relief for rural land from the cost of the prospective new assessments which are to go into effect from the beginning of the financial year, 1971-72.

This was our policy at the last election and, if we had been successful (as we will be at the next election), we would have legislated on these lines. We will follow the course of action that has been followed by Liberal Governments in other States. Both New South Wales and Victoria have abolished land tax; Western Australia has never imposed land tax; and in Queensland land tax applies only on freehold properties. It is easy to understand why the Government failed to carry out—

Mr. Langley: You have the little book?

Mr. GUNN: Yes, because it is pertinent. In the *Rules, Platform and Standing Orders of the Australian Labor Party*, under the heading "Finance and Taxation"—

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

Mr. GUNN: I will do that, because what I have to say is pertinent. The very first line under that heading states:

Progressive taxation on unimproved land values.

I grudgingly support this Bill.

Dr. EASTICK (Light): Although there is a need for rural relief, this Bill, whilst providing some relief, does not provide nearly enough. In the United Farmers and Graziers publication of August 19, 1971, the headlines indicate that immediate relief should be given top priority. The first and main sentence states:

Immediate economic relief for the rural producer hit by rising costs of production has been placed at the top of the priority list of the recently appointed United Farmers and Graziers Economic Research Committee.

No doubt, when the committee reports more fully it will indicate that this is at least one area where about \$1,000,000 of primary producers' expenditure can be taken from their production costs. The very fact that there is a need for rural relief seems to take an indeterminate time to sift through to the city and, unfortunately, it seems to take even longer for it to sift through to the Treasurer and to other Ministers. Opposition members were able to tell the House and the State of South Australia in the previous session of Parliament that there was an error in the information that was being fed to us by the Treasurer. Questions were asked over a long time, but they were either not answered or answered evasively by the Treasurer. Not only did he fail to give satisfactory replies but even when written to between sessions and asked for replies to the specific questions asked, he provided replies to questions other than those that had been asked, and no indication was given of the facts that had become the Government's property. I will refer to that matter more fully later when dealing with increases and the effect they have had.

In case members opposite do not fully appreciate that there is a rural problem, I point out that it is becoming more and more apparent week after week that difficulties are increasing. This is borne out by the increased number of calls for assistance to organizations in country towns, whether church or community, that provide for persons and families in real need. If figures were taken of the unemployed registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service offices in rural areas, whether at Port Lincoln, Gawler or Mount Gambier, it would be seen that a larger number of unemployed exists today

than existed a year ago, and the number is increasing. Members who represent rural districts are asked almost daily for assistance in obtaining employment for people who have been displaced from the rural scene. Country newspapers contain an increasing number of advertisements for mortgagee sales and sales of liquidated companies, involving welders, motor mechanics, and storekeepers who have not been able to maintain their position in a community that does not have the economic strength or potential it had when they started their enterprise. The Treasurer's remarks in the second reading explanation make interesting reading. He says:

Since the making of the 1970 assessment, the Government has viewed with growing concern the steady decline in the value of primary-producing land.

In 1970 the Government was worried and viewed with growing concern the steady decline"; yet it has done nothing about it. When given the opportunity in late 1970 and in early 1971 to give effective relief in this area (and in other areas relief would be available to the country) it failed to respond. It was just "viewing with concern" and not viewing with compassion, as is quite obvious. The Treasurer then says:

It has been estimated that rural land sales over the past 12 months reveal an average drop in value of about 20 per cent.

I suggest this is not the time when or the position in which we can deal in hard, cold statistics and say that there is an average drop of 20 per cent. It may well be that this is the figure as it applies to the whole State, but what is important is whether there has been a drop in respect of individuals. In many cases the drop is almost 100 per cent and I believe results will indicate that some drops have been greater than 100 per cent.

The position is desperate in many cases and it is more desperate, as I trust the Treasurer will know, in those areas where diversity is not possible. The persons who are tied to wheat or wool production are the hardest hit. I ask the Treasurer whether any relief will be given to them. The Treasurer then says:

In order to produce a fairer situation and to by-pass the costly and lengthy process of hearing and determining so many objections (which in any case could not resolve the real difficulty) the Government seeks to amend the principal Act so as to provide for an assessment to be made of the unimproved value, as of June 30, 1971, of all land used for primary production.



That is a statement of fact; that is what this Bill is all about. He then states:

The land tax revenue to be derived from rural land in 1971-1972 could as a result be expected to be \$1,000,000 or thereabouts, which was the amount expected by the Government when the 1970 assessment was undertaken and newly reduced rates set.

I ask the Treasurer, as I ask all members: what direction was given to the valuers of the department? What direction has been given in the present situation by which the Treasurer can say that the valuations created in 1970-71, plus the figures which have been juggled for rates, were expected to produce \$1,000,000 in return? Is the valuation totally determined before it is made or, by his own statement, is the Treasurer indicating to us that the Government created a fictitious situation and tried to engineer the values for that fictitious situation, but found that they came adrift and now, as it was told some six months ago, it has had to come to the House and ask for relief by way of a new or altered Bill?

I said that I would refer to the difficulty that members on this side of the House have had in obtaining information from the Treasurer and his Ministers. As early as February 25 of this year, a question was asked about the mean of values returned from different hundreds in the State. Although there was no immediate knowledge of the situation, the Treasurer said that he would obtain or seek information. On March 17, it was necessary to ask again, and the reply then was that no immediate answer was available. On March 25 the Minister of Works said that the promised information would be made available, and on April 6 (at page 4758 of *Hansard*) in answer to a different question, whether the hundreds of Port Adelaide and Munno Para had been included in the overall land tax for rural purposes, the reply given was that information would be available. This provided.

No help or information having been provided, it became necessary on June 18, 1971, to write to the Treasurer's Department and ask when that information would be available. This followed a telephone call to the Treasurer's Secretary, also asking when the promised information would be available. On June 23 an answer was received from the Premier's Department, but still it did not provide all the information requested or required. It stated:

Summaries have been prepared by the department hundred by hundred for 1970, but generally the mean unimproved value so obtained in each case is not considered of any real assistance in making the comparisons

suggested by Dr. Eastick with previous periods, as it has not been possible to separate the rural townships from the total assessed unimproved value in those previous periods. However, a comparison of the mean rural unimproved values (for example, between the hundreds of Nuriootpa and Barossa for 1970) was made by computer operation excluding the rural townships, but it must be understood that these mean figures cover all the different types of primary production in each hundred and are not a basis for determining the comparison between specific classes of primary-producing properties, which is what Dr. Eastick was seeking. The information obtained shows that the total unimproved values in the hundreds of Nuriootpa and Barossa are as follows:

	1965	1970
Hundred	Assessment	Assessment
	\$	\$
Nuriootpa .	4,438,960	5,162,630
Barossa . . .	3,777,870	4,612,610

and the mean rural unimproved value in each case for 1970 was: hundred of Nuriootpa, \$64.90 an acre; hundred of Barossa, \$70.60 an acre.

Whilst these figures did not provide all the information that had been asked for and did not make available to members the information they desired with which the better to serve their constituents, they did at least indicate that, in the quinquennial valuation period 1965 to 1970, for the hundred of Nuriootpa there had been an average increase of 16 per cent and for the hundred of Barossa an average increase of 22 per cent. So here we have two hundreds which are, almost identically, used agriculturally and viticulturally. They are contiguous, and the only difference is that one is north of the North Para River and the other is south of it. Yet here we have a variation of 16 per cent in the case of the hundred of Nuriootpa and 22 per cent in the hundred of Barossa. Can the Treasurer say what is the true answer and where are the other figures that should be available to members?

The Treasurer quickly passed over clauses 3 and 4 by saying that they effected minor consequential amendments, which enabled sections 21 and 23 of the principal Act to apply to the 1971 assessment. That may well be correct. Clause 3 strikes out "the" first occurring in section 21 of the principal Act and inserts "each". I do not think there can be any argument about that amendment, but I am a little puzzled about clause 4, which strikes out "quinquennial" from section 23 of the principal Act. If that amendment has import only in relation to the 1971 assessment, why was a provision not included which was specific to the 1971 assessment and which did not alter the purpose of the principal Act?

Will there be other effects of the removal of the word "quinquennial"? Also, clause 4 strikes out "such" from section 23 of the principal Act. As a result of the amendments to that section, it will provide:

The Commissioner shall, from time to time, assess, and add to the assessment all lands that become liable to land tax after the time for the making of any assessment, and before the time for the making of the next assessment.

If the Treasurer does not provide a further explanation of clause 4, the matter will be taken up in the Committee stage.

Following the Treasurer's failure to give members the information they sought, an article in the press stated that the land tax provisions would be altered to give relief to the rural community. I have explained how the reduction, involving \$250,000, will benefit the rural community, although it will not benefit it sufficiently. On July 27, when asked what was the purpose of that announcement, the Deputy Premier (who was in charge of the House at the time) replied (*Hansard*, page 333):

As I understand the position at present, if the valuations that applied at July 1, 1970, had been adhered to, the return to the State Government would have been more than the \$1,000,000 that the Premier said he would require from this source. I think the return could have been at least \$250,000 more, but I am speaking from memory only. Depending on the revaluation, the Government will decide whether it will be necessary to alter the rate in order to collect only the amount that the Government has indicated it wishes to collect from this source. The Premier has given that undertaking and it will be adhered to.

Here is another example of the need for members to prise vital information out of Ministers; such information could be inferred from press announcements but it was not specifically stated. In giving my general support to the Bill (with the qualifications I have made), I repeat that I trust that real relief will be given to the people needing it, even if that means implementing two rates of land tax. Real relief must be given to those people who have little prospect of diversifying their forms of production, as opposed to those more fortunate people who can diversify their production. Of course, I should like to see land tax completely abolished.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I support the Bill. From time to time when questions about land tax and unimproved values have been asked, on each occasion the Treasurer has replied to those questions. In the first instance he said that, on the advice of his

department, a reduction of 30 per cent had been agreed to. Then, as a result of protests from Opposition members, particularly those from country districts, the Treasurer announced that a revaluation would be made and that it was considered that values had decreased by a further 20 per cent. It is well known that unimproved land values in most areas of the State have decreased by considerably more than that—by up to 100 per cent in many areas. It is only in areas where the Rundle Street farmers have invested their money that land values have not decreased; it is only in those areas that this revaluation will not have a marked effect to any degree. Time and time again the Treasurer has been asked to give relief to people in rural areas in relation to the valuations of their properties for land tax purposes.

What worries and annoys me is that a new Valuation Department has been established which has been built up from very few officers to about 150 officers. That department has been responsible for preparing these valuations, of which 13,000 have been appealed against. As a result of those appeals the Treasurer has introduced this Bill. I have attended meetings of primary producers throughout the State, some organized by the United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated and some organized by the Liberal and Country League, at which officers of the Valuation Department have attended at the request of the organizers. Those officers tried diligently to justify the valuations they had arrived at.

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

Mr. VENNING: Having referred to the meeting attended by officers of the Valuation Department, I wonder how much pressure had been placed on them by the Government to keep the assessments to the desired level. The whole handling of the matter has proved shonky, the Treasurer now having said that the sum received by way of land tax on unimproved land is far in excess of what the Government had expected. If the Treasurer wished to reduce this amount of revenue, all he had to do was reduce the rate. I believe that grower organizations and members on this side (especially country members) are to be commended for their efforts to prove that the Government's attitude on this matter has been far from correct.

Although much pressure has been put on the Government to remove land tax on unimproved land, the Treasurer has repeatedly said that it must be retained if his approaches

to the Grants Commission are to be successful and that our amount of taxation per capita must be compared to that of the Eastern States. In consequence, he said he found it impossible to remove the tax as the Government is now doing. The Treasurer said also that, as he did not want to introduce such an obnoxious means of revenue as poker machines, land tax was being retained. Although Western Australia has a Labor Government, it has no land tax of this type; nor is it intended to introduce such a taxation on rural lands.

I had the pleasure about a fortnight ago, when in Western Australia, of visiting the House, and I heard that if an election were held at this stage there would be a change of Government after only such a short time. People in that State have realized that they listened to rash promises made by the Labor Party. At the time of the farmers' march last July, the Treasurer indicated to those gathered at Elder Park that the Government would do something about rural land tax but only now it is doing something. It is the policy of those on this side that rural land tax in this State should be phased out altogether but, while we have this Government, we must apparently go along with its policy on the matter. I sincerely hope that the new valuation will be a factual one. I support the Bill.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I, too, support the Bill, belatedly though it has been introduced. On March 23 last, when the House had resumed for the autumn sitting of last session, the Leader made a speech on this matter and concluded his remarks by saying:

This Government—

referring to the Dunstan Labor Government—

—owes to the rural sector a sympathetic hearing, and it should take action in keeping with that of the other States in this matter. Until it takes that action, we will continue to denigrate the Government for its unsympathetic attitude to the policy of phasing out land tax in rural areas.

That was typical of the Opposition's attitude to this matter earlier in the year. The Leader had apparently done much more homework than had the Government, because on that occasion he could see that the sum raised would far exceed the \$1,000,000 the Treasurer said it would be. As a member of the 13 per cent who feed the nation. I do not mind contributing towards taxation, but the rural economy cannot bear this burden. The Leader spelt out the situation in that well-documented speech

of March 23. This will still be recited in 1973. In reply to my Question on Notice, the Treasurer said today that no fewer than 14,700 objections had been lodged to the 1971 quinquennial assessment out of a total of 380,000 assessments. I should say that there are about 28,000 landholders in the community, and that includes the 20-acre blocks. Most of the producers who contribute the bulk of the wealth from this industry would be included in that figure of 14,700.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: We expect them to pay \$1,000,000. How much is paid altogether?

Mr. RODDA: I understand it is about \$8,000,000, and the balance finds its way back in costs to the people the Minister and I represent. In the long run it is the person who pays who suffers most. Members of the rural community do not mind paying taxation if they can afford it. As the member for Kavel pointed out, this is a capital tax, and the man on the land, the primary producer, these people who are the salt of the earth, are being crippled by capital taxation.

Mr. Wright: What about the workers?

Mr. RODDA: They have never been better off. So many of the people I represent are being forced off the land to join the workers.

Mr. Wright: Tell us how many.

Mr. RODDA: I would hate to tell the honourable member, but there are far too many. This situation has been brought about by the general down-turn in the economy and by the inflation of costs as a result of high wages and profits.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is so much audible conversation that I cannot hear the honourable member for Victoria. The *Hansard* reporters must be given an opportunity to hear what the honourable member is saying.

Mr. RODDA: When he introduced the Bill, the Treasurer pointed out that there had been about a 20 per cent reduction in the value of land. However, I hope that valuers will not be instructed to down-value all properties by 20 per cent as, in my district, there are some vicious anomalies. Because of the special qualities of the soil, my area has the good fortune to have the wine-producing areas of Terra Rossa, Padthaway and Coonawarra. The wine industry is making a wonderful contribution to the economy of the State. Some people, through no fault of their own, have properties adjacent to grapegrowing areas and, because it may be suggested that ultimately such land

can be used for grapegrowing, their land may be assessed at the value of \$500 or \$600 an acre.

People who are running properties of 900 acres as grazing property are receiving a land tax bill of between \$900 and \$1,000. As honourable members would know, in the present economic squeeze, this is beyond the pale. I draw this matter to the attention of the Government; I hope that the valuers who will make the assessments are aware of it. If there is to be a 20 per cent reduction of valuation in special instances, I make a plea on behalf of people whose properties are near these grapegrowing areas. I ask that the purpose for which the properties are being used is taken into account. If a property is sold and used for grapegrowing purposes, perhaps it can then stand the high rate of tax. I do not think a landholder or entrepreneur practising this new form of enterprise would object to it. Surely there can be a valuation fixed that pays due regard to the purpose for which the land is used. A woolgrower who is battling for his living at Padthaway should not be expected to pay high rates simply because a nearby property has a price on it of about \$500 or \$600 an acre.

Mr. Harrison: Do you support the Bill?

Mr. RODDA: Yes. This is an opportunity to correct the anomalies that have affected people in my district. Anomalies occur in certain cases, and in the foothills, because of sales for specific purposes, arable land carries a burden that it cannot sustain. The Bill breaks new ground and I hope that the Government, during its term of office, will recognize that. As the member for Rocky River has said, our policy is to abolish land tax on rural land.

Mr. Clark: You've had plenty of years to do that.

Mr. RODDA: Members opposite may castigate the Opposition, but things have changed. The member for Elizabeth is a fair man, and we are just asking him to be reasonable. Inflation has affected the rural community to an extent that could not have been estimated previously. We know this because we represent and live with these people, and many of us are from the land.

Mr. Langley: You've got a one-track mind.

Mr. RODDA: The L.C.L. is the greatest Party in Australia and there is nothing about a one-track mind in that policy. It has something for everyone; its philosophy offends no-one and embraces everyone. More than derision from members opposite is needed to

successfully denigrate the great policy that was written into a political philosophy in 1932.

Mr. Clark: You haven't changed it since.

Mr. RODDA: There is no need to change anything that is good. Members opposite will need to do better than they have done in this Bill if they want to return to the Treasury benches in 1973. True, we are grateful for the crumbs that are in the Bill, but we will be speaking on specific clauses in Committee. At this stage, I support the measure.

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): I support the Bill, as I should imagine every landholder in South Australia would do. However, if the Government had realized the position in the country areas and the position regarding land values when the previous Bill was before the House, the present measure would have been unnecessary. This Bill has been introduced only because of pressure from this side and from the landholders and farmers' organizations that have got together and proved what a community can do when it considers it has been treated unjustly, as was the case with the 1970 quinquennial land tax assessment. The member for Rocky River asked the Treasurer about the assessment on March 10, 1971 (page 3910 of *Hansard*) and the Treasurer said:

An examination of the property sales in all areas of South Australia does not bear out the honourable member's contention that, at July 1, 1970, land values were lower than they were at July 1, 1965. Indeed, there were significant increases in values in almost every area . . . The Government is therefore doing its utmost to take into account any falls in land values. I point out, however, that the values taken from land sales in rural areas of the State show that in practically every area there have been significant increases in land values between July 1, 1965, and July 1, 1970 . . .

Those words prove how out of touch the Treasurer was about land values in South Australia. On March 16 of the same year (page 4057 of *Hansard*) I asked the following question:

Can the Treasurer substantiate the following remarks he made in concluding a reply to a question about the quinquennial land tax assessments asked last Wednesday by the member for Rocky River: "Even though recent sales are considered, the values in most areas of the State are still significantly about those of July 1, 1965"?

I also said that recent sales were down to about the 1955 level. I shall now substantiate my statement that land values in my district were down to about the 1955 level. In 1951, I purchased a farm for \$48 an acre. Soon after that land values increased and, when I asked

that question in the House, sales were being made at about \$50 or \$58 an acre, which was almost back to the 1955 level. Despite that, the Treasurer said that values in July, 1970, were still significantly higher than values in June, 1965, and that proved how out of touch he was about land values.

Many councils in South Australia are embarrassed at present. One council had a new assessment of annual values carried out three years ago, at a cost of about \$1,000 or \$2,000. Since then land values have dropped to such an extent that a sale was made last June at \$3 an acre less than the council assessment. Naturally, the new owner appealed in June, when he had the right of appeal against the assessment. The council had no alternative but to uphold the appeal, because the sale was at a price less than the assessment, and this placed the council in the position where it would require a new assessment next year in order to be fair to the ratepayers who did not appeal. This assessment will cost the council several thousand dollars, and every council will be placed in a similar embarrassing position, except councils working on a land-values system that adopted the quinquennial land tax assessment. I organized a meeting at Farrell Flat, at which officers from the Valuation Department attended and gave their opinions on land values in that district. Local residents also spoke, but I believe that the different opinions about the price of land were caused because, although sales had been held before the meeting, details of the sales had not been received by the Valuation Department and the officers were not aware of the prices realized. I am sure that the meeting proved to the department that land values were considerably lower than the department had realized, and when the officers returned to the city I think their opinions influenced the Government to decide to have another assessment. When explaining the Bill, the Treasurer said:

It is estimated that rural land sales over the past 12 months reveal an average drop in value of about 20 per cent.

I disagree with that statement: land values dropped considerably until June, 1970, but since then they have not dropped by 20 per cent. The maximum would possibly be 10 per cent, and I wonder whether the reference to 20 per cent indicates the amount of reduction that will be shown in the assessment. The member for Eyre spoke about a computer exercise or an overall reduction of 30 per cent, but the

Treasurer's statement that values had dropped by 20 per cent leads me to believe that there will be a 20 per cent reduction in the assessment. I spoke to a land valuator last Friday: he had been valuing a property and said that valuers did not know what assessments to place on improvements. Purchasers of land were usually adding to an existing holding and did not want the improvements, so that the valuer's valuation of improvements was usually low. In Georgetown, one of the best wheat-growing districts in the State, land was sold three years ago for \$126 an acre, but three weeks ago a property across the road from this was sold for \$60 an acre, and I can vouch for that price because my daughter purchased it.

The Treasurer said that 13,000 appeals had been made out of a total of 48,000 assessments, but people owning property of 500 or 600 acres, although having an increase in their assessment of between 33 per cent and 40 per cent, also benefited from a reduction in the rate of 40 per cent, so that the land tax to be paid was almost identical to that paid the previous year. Although these people realized that their assessment was too high, as they did not have to pay more tax they were happy with this situation. I estimate that there are many thousands of farms with an area of 500 to 600 acres, so that there could have been many more appeals than the 13,000 that were made. Many landowners did not receive the land tax assessment until after the closing date for lodging appeals. I telephoned the department six or seven times asking whether these people had any right of appeal, but I was told that they did not have such a right.

Mr. Coumbe: Why did they receive them late?

Mr. ALLEN: I understand that the computer failed. This situation should be corrected, and if, under the new assessment, mistakes occur with the computer and people do not receive their assessments until after the closing date for lodging appeals, I hope that the Government will allow them a further period in which to appeal.

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN (Alexandra): I support the Bill and, like other members, I congratulate the Government on its Houdini-like performance. I do not think I have ever seen a Government that is so capable of getting out of a difficult situation without blushing. With many other members I attended the farmers' march last year, and I

realized that, from the impression given by the address of the Treasurer at that march, every farmer believed that he would pay less land tax. I did not believe it myself, because I have been associated with this House for many years and I knew that I had to consider closely what had been said. What the Treasurer said he carried out, and there is no question about that. However, the farmers were impressed because they did not understand exactly what the Treasurer said. They believed they would actually pay less land tax following his statement at the march. Later, he introduced the legislation, which he said at the march that he would introduce, and then he was pressed by the Opposition to remove rural land tax.

Earlier that year the Leader of the Opposition suggested that 80 per cent of land tax should be removed within two years, because of the depression that was then occurring in the rural industry. As the year progressed, it was clear that the depression in rural industries was gaining momentum. The Leader said that he was in favour of abolishing land tax on primary-producing land. That is what he and I both believe is necessary. Some of the other States have already done this, and I think that this State should abolish land tax, too. Land tax was established originally not as a revenue-producing measure but with the idea of encouraging the breaking up of large estates. I believe it was established in England first, but I am not sure about other countries. Land tax became controversial in England, and soon after its introduction there Australia followed England's lead both in the Commonwealth and in the States. Land tax was used to see that large estates were not encouraged at a time when there was a pressure of people who wanted them to be turned into economic units.

I remember the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. O'Halloran) about 15 years ago complaining about land tax and saying it was never meant to be a revenue-producing measure. He related the history of land tax, and I agreed with his interpretation of it. Nevertheless, the buoyant times occurring in primary production and continuing for several decades (starting at the end of the 1930's and continuing during the Second World War) showed a firming. After that, there was a spectacular rise in income from some primary production. In those days, there was not the pressure to remove land tax that there is today.

Capital tax on land is an extremely heavy burden nowadays, but land tax is by no means the heaviest burden, as succession duties exceed

land tax by far. Last year, the Treasurer produced some random samples from 48,000 assessments and showed that in relatively few cases had the assessments increased significantly. However, assessments are not necessarily farms. If one examines the statistics of farms, a completely different position can be seen than by just looking at the number of assessments. In South Australia, there are only 18,000 farms of over 100 acres, and 100 acres is not a very large farm in any area. A farm of that size might be a big holding in an irrigated fruit area, but not in broad-acre terms. Without irrigation, 100 acres is scarcely viable, except when used for market gardening. The figures I am quoting are for 1965-66; there might have been slight variations in the meantime.

There are only 16,000 holdings of over 200 acres, which is not a big farm. No-one could make a living on wheat, sheep or beef cattle on 200 acres unless he had specially heavy capitalization such as lot feeding or something of that nature. Some 200-acre farms could be viable if the farmer bought a good deal of feed and managed the property skilfully. There are only 13,000 holdings (about one-quarter of the number of assessments the Treasurer quoted) of over 500 acres, which is not a big farm. Anyone who goes to the wheat areas today will see that 500 acres is scarcely enough to support the owner. Some people who owe no money can support themselves on 500 acres but, generally speaking, 500 acres is too small. Even some farms of over 500 acres are virtually uneconomic.

I have had something to do with land tax over the years because at one time I represented an area that was very much affected by land tax as a result of the increase in values with the increasing size of the metropolitan area. Land tax made it virtually impossible for people to carry on without some alleviation. The alleviation was made possible by Parliament's providing that, in certain proclaimed areas where subdivisional values affected the value of the land, the landholder could go on paying at the rate of rural value. It was a good provision whereby the landholder continued to pay at the rural value even though his land might have been far more valuable for subdivision. If he sold the land, he had to make up the difference in land tax for the past five years. That, too, was a good provision, because it enabled people to farm land fairly close to Adelaide. People still farming land under that provision are doing reasonably well and are doing a good job for the State.

Some of the best farming country in the State is close to Adelaide.

There is an additional anomaly: there is land near Adelaide within reach of the city by modern motor vehicle and served by the fine road system outside the metropolitan area. I say "outside" because members know that I am concerned about the transit of traffic through the metropolitan area. There should be better traffic facilities through the metropolitan area. However, there is a good road system outside the metropolitan area, and this means that places farther afield are within easier reach of Adelaide than they used to be. Some of the properties in question could be subdivided if it were not for the planning and development legislation, which protects the catchment areas of the State. Unquestionably, uncontrolled subdivision within a catchment area cannot continue; there must be control here, and that is hampering the position of certain landowners.

In other areas not affected by subdivision, the land value has been enhanced because of their proximity to Adelaide. As we know, valuation officers can always cite comparable sales and, if there is anywhere in the district a sale involving a high price, these officers have evidence on which an appeal can be disallowed, even though similar properties in the same district may not fetch such a high price. Certainly, many objections against recent assessments can be sustained, because the assessments were made as at July 1, 1970, the objections having been lodged since that time. The Treasurer said:

The unfortunate result is that under the Act as it now stands the 1971-72 land tax must be based on an assessment which, in effect, now grossly over-values much of the primary-producing land.

Everyone agrees with that, and we are glad that the Treasurer makes this comment. However, I point out that reducing land values simply by means of a reassessment on the old basis will continue some of the existing injustices. I refer again to properties which, because of some Government action, cannot be subdivided or which, because of their proximity to Adelaide, have a value far in excess of their primary-producing value. It has been said that land should be assessed on its productive value, and that has been tried.

Some years ago, the Playford Government set up a committee of inquiry consisting of the late Mr. Justice Ligertwood, Mr. Reiners (the then Commissioner of Land Tax) and Mr.

Shanahan, and that committee reported that an assessment based on productivity was not practicable; having been tried in other parts of the world, it was not successful. Because productivity varies among farms, it is impossible to make an assessment on this basis. I think the only answer in the circumstances is to abolish land tax on primary-producing land, and this would result in a loss of revenue of only about \$1,000,000. I point out that having to contribute to this \$1,000,000 is sufficient to upset the operations of many farmers although, as the Treasurer says, most of the 28,000 holdings concerned are little affected by land tax.

Probably less than half the people concerned would be very much affected, although many would be affected in a minor way. However, these people cannot honestly see the justification for land tax and, to my mind, the solution is to abolish it altogether in respect of primary-producing land. Indeed, in this regard we have the lead of other States to follow. Owners of primary-producing land cannot pass on their costs: unlike those engaged in secondary industry and in other forms of production (whether it involves supplying goods or services), they must absorb their costs. I know of the owner of a property who is paying \$1.50 an acre in land tax alone. By comparison with other properties, this property is far less productive. However, because land cannot be assessed on its productive value, the person to whose property I refer has to pay this tax. Under the Bill, assessments will be reduced, but this person will still be in a relatively poorer position than are the owners of more productive properties who, in turn, will also have their assessments reduced. Therefore, it is important that we should grasp the nettle now and remove land tax from primary-producing land, as some of the Eastern States have done. Although I support the Bill, I suggest that the Government seriously consider straight away removing land tax altogether, because this will be a continuing problem. However much we modify the assessment system as it applies to primary-producing land, we will never solve the problem until we remove land tax altogether.

Mr. WARDLE (Murray): I, too, support the Bill. I do not intend to read from *Hansard* previous speeches that have been made. I believe that in this debate most of what has been said on this matter in previous debates in the last 18 months has been quoted from *Hansard*. Therefore, it would be idle and repetitious to include some of that again. I

cannot but support the Bill, as it will bring some relief to rural producers, many of whom have properties in my district. Probably, in the 50 years working life of a farmer, 25 years are not years of prosperity and plenty. Probably we saw 15 years of prosperity between 1950 and 1965; before then there were the poor years of the 1930's. These situations come and go in the life of a man on the land. Farmers are not now enjoying prosperity. I believe that land tax has been largely accepted over many years because there has been a margin of profit in farming, and therefore it has been a cost that the man on the land could bear. At present we can all agree that this cost could readily be removed from the long list of costs that the farmer must bear, as this would give him some relief in the distress he presently faces. The matter of increasing assessments has been referred to by various members. The increases have varied from district to district. In my area, along the irrigated swamps (and the member for Alexandra was probably thinking of some of the highly irrigated areas, especially along the Murray) it is possible to make a living from less than 100 acres. Even here, the increase in assessments was about 30 per cent to 40 per cent. Although these people have a reasonably stable market for their dairy products, this type of increase is more than they can be expected to bear.

The situation is much worse for the dry-land farmer. I believe that, when the farming community feels the strain of increased prices, the people in the light country feel it most of all, because in these areas land prices fall much more quickly and to a much greater extent than is the case in most other areas. There have been several auctions in the lighter Mallee areas lately where forced sales have been made, but few people have attended the auctions. In many cases there have been no bids at all. These areas have been greatly affected by the primary industry recession. In these areas it will be difficult to make an assessment, because the land is just not selling at all. Therefore, it will be a tremendous relief to people in rural areas to have a new assessment made, for we believe that the assessment will decrease the present valuations on farming properties and the land tax payable. Because the Bill will bring some relief to rural communities, I support it.

Mr. COUNBE (Torrens): So far in this debate all the members who have spoken have represented country areas. As a city member, I support the Bill because I realize that all

the people of the State are concerned about problems that face primary producers. The rural producing sector is most important in maintaining the viability of the whole economy. When South Australian farmers and graziers are in a bad situation, secondary industries normally suffer. This has been mitigated to some extent in recent years because of the activities of Sir Thomas Playford in diversifying industries and in attracting to South Australia many secondary industries. Despite this, when rural industry has a problem, sooner or later secondary industry and the people in Adelaide and other cities are affected in no uncertain way. Therefore, I support the Bill, which will give some relief, although not as much as I should like to see, to the rural producers in South Australia.

Having the interest of South Australia at heart, I believe that rural producers have a real problem. The very introduction of this Bill entirely vindicates the attitude taken by the Opposition some time ago, especially as enunciated by the Leader. Twice within seven days we have seen the Government in this position, first with regard to the Dartmouth dam and now with regard to the land tax issue; perhaps next week the Government will be in this position with regard to some other issue. The Bill sets out to relieve to some extent the burden of land tax that is borne by the rural producers in South Australia. I support the measure wholeheartedly, realizing that, although my constituents will not get relief, the rural community needs all the assistance that it can get, not only to survive but to try to make a living. Otherwise, we in the city and metropolitan areas will not have food, and the State will not progress. The warning given by the Leader about the Government's folly has come true and this Bill gives effect to the points he has made. For the second time in a week, the Treasurer has been forced to accept L.C.L. thinking. Our Party represents all sections of the community, including the small man.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: And the working people?

Mr. COUNBE: Yes, and our policy contrasts with the fatuous statements made by the member for Stuart on rural policy, which were a disgrace to him. If there were more farming people in his district, he would not be a member of this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the member for Torrens please relate his remarks to the Bill?



Mr. COUMBE: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member for Alexandra has pointed out the facts on land tax and the anomalies that can occur regarding subdivisional land near the city. We know that councils often adopt land tax values as a basis for water rating. The Treasurer, in his second reading explanation, referred to the Commissioner of Waterworks, but that position was abolished about 30 years ago and the Treasurer should have referred to the Minister of Works. However, the fact that many councils adopt the water rating assessment as a basis for their assessment is important in this context. We are adjusting the assessment for one year but providing that it will apply for the next four years. Whereas previously we have had quinquennial assessments, when the time for the next quinquennial assessment comes, in 1975, we will go on with a new assessment. Although I and many country members on this side have spoken in this debate, only the Treasurer has spoken for the Government. He is the only one on the Government benches who has supported the Bill, yet every member on this side has supported it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's not true. You're only playing to the people in the gallery.

Mr. COUMBE: Not at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! No reference can be made to the gallery.

Mr. COUMBE: I do not need to take lessons from the Minister of Local Government about decorum in this House. If I took lessons from him, they would be on a fairly low scale. I have listened to him, both as member for Edwardstown when he was in Opposition and in his present exalted position on the Government front bench, but my admiration has not increased one iota. The Government originally ignored completely the Leader's plea when he pointed out the need to introduce the provisions contained in this Bill. The Treasurer produced from the computer a sample from many assessments, but he denied the need to make the adjustments that we suggested were necessary.

Perhaps we should go further than is provided in this Bill. Whether or not you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, think it funny, I believe this is a most serious matter. That is why, as a city member, I support this measure. I know that people living in my district will still pay land tax, but I believe that I will have the support of most of my electors in supporting this measure, which will give

relief to a most deserving section of the community, the rural section, without which South Australia could fall to the ground.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: You had better pass that message on to your Commonwealth colleagues.

Mr. COUMBE: It is all right for the newly appointed Minister of Labour and Industry to chide me and for Government members to laugh, but I have been a member for a little longer than has the Minister and I have studied more thoroughly than have the Minister and other Government members a few facts of life.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. COUMBE: Certainly, Sir. Unless we have a healthy rural community in South Australia the State will not progress. Despite the progress made in secondary industry, whilst the rural production declines, sooner or later the situation will be reflected in the employment position in secondary industry. Probably the Minister knows that there has been a slackening off of employment in secondary industries, but I hope that this situation will not continue.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Why not approach the Commonwealth Government about it?

Mr. COUMBE: Whenever this Government gets into trouble it blames everyone else but itself. Its favourite hobby horse is the Commonwealth Government, which the Minister is now blaming.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must call the attention of the member for Torrens and other members to the fact that we are dealing with a Bill concerning land tax on rural properties. The honourable member must relate his remarks to the Bill now being considered.

Mr. COUMBE: Thank you, Sir. I am sure that all members will support this Bill, but I do not think it goes far enough. As the Leader has said, he wants it to go farther, and I support him in that. I support the measure because it will give some modicum (however meagre and however delayed) of relief to that important section of the community, the rural-producing section. The land tax assessment provided for in this Bill will be readjusted for one year and will apply for the four remaining years of the so-called quinquennial assessment. Persons to whom the assessment applies will have the right of

appeal as they have under a normal quinquennial assessment, and that is an important aspect. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition emphasized this matter very cogently some months ago and that the Government refused to take action then but is now being forced to do so once again brings into the public eye the credibility of this Government in general and of the Treasurer in particular. I believe that people in the rural community will consider seriously this Government move and that they will also consider promises made by the Treasurer in the past on behalf of the Government. He has now been forced by the Opposition to take the action contemplated in this Bill. As a city member, but speaking on behalf of the rural-producing community in the State, I support the Bill because I believe it will give some relief to those most deserving of it.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I, too, support the Bill, because I believe it provides some small relief to that sector of the community that is going through one of the worst economic crises in the State's history.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Don't be silly: go back to the depression of 1927-32.

Mr. EVANS: I will prove it to the Minister in a debate later this session. I refer mainly to the part of the State that I represent, the Adelaide Hills, in which are situated many primary producers, who will receive some benefit from the Bill. However, this area must be further considered, particularly those properties in the catchment area that are there to give to the city area a run-off area for the water supply. In the past people valuing primary-producing properties have classified all of the property as primary producing, regardless of whether it was partly cleared or wholly cleared. A person may own 200 acres in one block, 50 acres of it being cleared and being used for primary production and 150 acres still in its natural bushland state, but he has been rated for land tax on the overall property. I believe, or at least I hope, that today we realize that it is essential that we preserve as much natural bushland in the catchment areas as possible. If we continue to impose charges that are prohibitive on this sector of our community, it will have two alternatives; first, to sell the property to another person who will eventually face the same predicament, or, secondly, to clear the bushland in order to improve the production potential of the property. By doing this, we create the havoc and the rape of the Hills that people say we should

not be creating. I ask the one Minister now left in the Chamber to ask the Minister for Environment and Conservation to take up this matter whenever Cabinet discusses land tax in relation to primary production.

I ask Government members to take up this matter in their Caucus room before the final assessments are sent out to property owners in this area. There is every justification, on the knowledge we have today, for abolishing land tax overall within the catchment area of our reservoirs. We should be offering every incentive we can for people to leave as much of the bushland as they can afford to leave and, if they cannot afford to leave it, the State should buy it. There is a loss in this area where primary-producing land is acquired. (I refer to it as primary-producing land because it is rated as such). The Government clears the bushland and plants pines. Apart from that, it takes away ratable property, on which it pays no rates. At the same time, a high land tax valuation is placed on other properties.

The member for Alexandra raised this point in regard to properties situated close to Adelaide on which there has been a substantial increase in property values. We know the reason for this is that the properties are accessible to the city, but we are now putting restrictions on their use. Pigs cannot be kept on some sections of this primary-producing land. Some people who bought properties for pig raising have been told that their properties cannot be used for pigs. That usage of the land is lost to the person with a freehold title, but he accepts the fact that we must protect the city water supply.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Do you agree with that?

Mr. EVANS: Yes. If the Minister had been in the Aldgate hall in April this year he would have heard me say that that was the right and proper course.

Mr. Payne: You did not say that in the House. You walked along a tightrope for about half an hour.

Mr. EVANS: If the honourable member refers to the report of that debate he will see that in this Chamber and in the Aldgate hall in April I said that there should be no subdivision outside the township areas, and that I disagreed to the 20-acre subdivision proposal. Another use lost to the people of the area is that they cannot have a poultry farm within a catchment area, nor are they allowed to build a dairy, so the primary production potential of these areas has been reduced. Will this

be taken into account when unimproved land values are set? The valuers are supposed to consider only the unimproved value of the property, but the Treasurer referred to profitability: in his second reading explanation, he said:

Since that date it has also become clear that the sales on which the assessment was based did not, in fact, fully reflect the drop which had already occurred in the profitability of rural production.

The Treasurer was not looking at the unimproved value but was considering the profitability of rural land. However, the valuers based the valuation not on profitability but on some related sale in the area. I take the same point as the member for Alexandra took, namely, that properties even alongside one another cannot be compared in areas close to the city. In the Hills, in particular, one property might have a steep terrain whereas the neighbouring property might be flat. One property will bring a higher price than the adjoining property; yet valuers tend to pick on a value an acre, and compare them as identical properties. I am sure that sometimes the valuers obtain valuations not by observation but by rule of thumb, saying, "This one has been sold; there are 14 others of similar size in the area," and they then put a similar price on them. Because of the rapid change in the terrain and in the fertility of land, a value can be put on a property only by observation, because that is the only way to know whether 75 per cent or 50 per cent of the property has been cleared for primary production.

I ask the one Minister present in the House to make the point to Cabinet that it is essential that only the land that is productive should be considered. Also, I ask the Government to consider introducing some other amendment to the legislation whereby all the land that falls within the catchment area will be exempt. If the Government cannot go as far as that, at least all of the natural bushland that is left should be exempt, so that some incentive would be given to people to leave it as it is. If this is not done, all this land will be cleared because of the high taxes and rates. The assessment affects not only land tax but also water rates. Most of the primary producers in the area I represent have reticulated water passing at least one of the frontages of their property, so they must pay high water rates although, as this is the highest rainfall area of the State, they do not want reticulated water. The land valuation has a direct relationship to water rates. Like other honourable members, I wonder how the

assessment will be arrived at. The Treasurer has said that the Government expects to raise \$1,000,000. Is he predetermining what sort of value the valuer should place on the property? Is he saying, "I want you to rate the properties so that the Government will end up with \$1,000,000"? Is he saying, "Put a genuine value on, taking into consideration the profitability of the property"? Is that why he referred to the profitability of the property? Or is he saying, "Put it on the unimproved value of the property"?

Much has been said about the proposal to bring about this reduction in land tax, and I hope it is a considerable reduction. I support that move, but I believe there is a clash in use of land within the areas close to the city. The member for Alexandra raised two of the areas that concern people, and I have raised the third area, namely, the responsibility for protecting the city's water supply. I do not think any honourable member would laugh about the seriousness of that matter. I believe we should do everything possible, small though the incentive may be, by removing land tax in those areas to encourage people to protect that water supply. Other States have abolished land tax because they realized the seriousness of the rural economy, whereas South Australia, one of the smaller States, is bickering about \$1,000,000 when, with one flash, the Government could abolish land tax if it wished to do so. However, this Bill is a small step in that direction.

Mr. Keneally: I knew of something costing \$570,000 on your side of the House.

Mr. EVANS: The collective farmer advocate from Stuart may make his view if he likes to, but I think it is a disgrace (I use the word that the present Minister of Roads and Transport used) that the back-benchers on the Government side have not been prepared in this debate to say one word, except by interjection. I support the Bill because I believe it will afford some small relief to the rural producers of this State.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GENERAL)**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 26. Page 1170.)

Mr. BROWN (Whyalla): When I was speaking to this Bill last Thursday afternoon, I was pointing out that the general trend in local government today is to spread the financial

responsibility among more people and also to spread the payments of rates among more people. I believe that the Local Government Association has failed, as I said on Thursday afternoon, to lead the people it represents in the right direction.

Mr. Gunn: That is only wishful thinking on your part.

Mr. BROWN: Is the member for Eyre grandstanding to the audience?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! No reference can be made to that. The member for Whyalla.

Mr. BROWN: I said on Thursday afternoon that members of the Opposition seemed to think I was not dealing with the Bill because I was dealing with spreading the financial responsibility for local government among more people. However, that is dealt with in this Bill. If the member for Eyre looks at the Bill he, too, will realize that. First, I want to deal with clause 2, which amends the definition of "ratable property" in section 5 of the principal Act as regards Government-owned houses and certain other buildings owned by the Government. I agree wholeheartedly with this provision that, where the Government owns buildings in local government areas, it has a responsibility to pay the rates on those buildings to the councils concerned. This amendment provides for the Government's paying a rate even if the property owned by the Government is unoccupied when the council adopts its assessment.

The present position in local government is that, where a property is owned in a council area by an owner who does not live in that area, the question arises whether he will not demand a postal vote. In this case, I do not believe the Government would demand such a vote, but I question whether it should not demand one. This amendment continues the tendency to provide a fairer basis of rating for such property. If we look at the report by the Local Government Act Revision Committee, we see at paragraph 3741 on page 400, under "Summary of Recommendations":

Although the provision of new sources of revenue for local government is not justified by any claim that rates have reached saturation point, it is justified by a number of other important factors. These factors include the preservation of the autonomy of local government and the spreading of the cost of local government more fairly over the community.

That is exactly what this clause does by making the Government pay a rate on its property, whether or not it has tenants. I

question whether in fact the Local Government Association is not burying its head in the sand, like an ostrich, if it does not support the basic principle of giving a vote to those people who pay rates and whether we should not do away with the whole system of multiple voting, anyway. We must seriously consider this matter, because there is a tendency to spread the financial burden among more people, while at the same time we are not prepared through the Local Government Association to give those people the right to vote.

Clause 4 concerns the amalgamation of two or more councils. This is an important step for local government to take but, unfortunately, independent councils tend to look at their own areas very narrowly, from the point of view that they want to retain their own rights to themselves. I doubt very much whether they are looking at the future with any great vision. They should do away with this narrow-mindedness and look at things with a much more open mind. In my district at present there is a tendency to join forces, if not to amalgamate. That is important. For example, in the Whyalla area a meeting is now taking place between representatives of the Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Lincoln councils. I believe that is a step in the right direction because overall (let us be honest about it) we are dealing particularly with local government problems of finance, and this is one way in which some of those financial problems can be overcome. For example, if there is a need to look into some legal problem or to send some local government officer to other States or to Adelaide on a matter allied to local government, the four councils can quite easily band together and send a representative, whereas separately they would find it difficult. In this way the four councils involved have the necessary financial ability. This is a step in the right direction that more councils should adopt, even if they are not willing to accept the suggestion that they should amalgamate. They should at least join forces in this way to overcome the financial burdens placed on them.

A conference was recently held in Canberra on tourism. We were able to send the clerk of the Whyalla council to that conference simply because of a joint venture by the four councils I have referred to. I therefore support the clause. When the time comes and the necessity arises I hope there will be amalgamations of councils. With clause 6, which

deals with the qualifications of members of councils, we are back to the question of franchise. The clause provides that every ratepayer of 18 years of age or older is qualified to be a member of a council. This is a progressive step forward. The present Government earlier introduced a Bill to lower the minimum voting age in general elections to 18 years. Those people who oppose this idea do so because they believe that 18-year-olds are irresponsible. I agree that some 18-year-olds I have met are irresponsible, but members opposite are much older than that and they are sometimes very irresponsible. So, clause 6 represents a step forward and fits in with the Government's decision to reduce the voting age in general elections.

The Local Government Act Revision Committee recommended that we should consider a poll tax. There has been some opposition to that recommendation, and perhaps it could be said to be justified. However, there could be some financial advantages in having a poll tax.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Is that your Party's policy?

Mr. BROWN: I did not say that: I said that the Local Government Act Revision Committee had made a recommendation.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Be careful! You may get into trouble.

Mr. BROWN: I will not get into trouble. It remains to be seen whether we ought to support the recommendation. If we support the idea of a poll tax on people aged 18 years and older, we should also give 18-year-olds the right to vote.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: What is your view on the poll tax?

Mr. BROWN: Frankly, I have not given it serious thought. The tendency in local government is to spread the financial responsibility over more people. I still say that, even on that basis, we cannot widen the financial responsibility without giving all the people affected the right to vote in council elections. It is as simple as that.

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: It is not that simple. You will not tell us what you believe.

Mr. BROWN: It is a fundamental principle of democracy that everybody should have a vote. Although the Local Government Association is obviously opposed to that, it is not backward in saying that more people should have to pay rates. Clause 15, which provides that more people may have to pay for garbage collection, is a step in the right direction.

If the garbage fee is a percentage of the rate, many people will have to pay more than the relevant fee but, of course, that fee would be less than the minimum rate. So, this provision places the burden on a wider range of people. I support the provision, which has been badly needed in the principal Act for many years.

Clause 17, which deals with social workers and the revenue required for them, is a step in the right direction. As late as this year my own council seriously considered providing finance for a social worker. Because local government is becoming more and more involved in the social problems of the community, it ought to consider appointing social workers. I sometimes wonder whether we should try to solve our problems rather than create them. The need for social workers is growing. Clause 18 empowers councils to spend money on providing homes for elderly people. When dealing with the previous Local Government Act Amendment Bill, I said that as late as this year we purchased a motel as a project for elderly citizens. I am pleased that that project was undertaken mainly as a community effort. If that approach is adopted, the council should be responsible for the project. This, too, is a step in the right direction.

While clause 35, which deals with the abandonment of motor vehicles on roads, is perhaps only a minor part of the Bill, in the past two years the Whyalla City Council has had numerous problems in this connection. It seems that the problem revolves around the legal provisions for getting rid of abandoned motor vehicles. I believe that new provisions should be inserted, and I am pleased to see that clause 35 deals with this problem. As I said at the outset, I support this Bill with some reservations regarding the voting rights of the ordinary ratepayer to vote at local government elections. I believe that in the future we will have to consider further amendments to the legislation. Members opposite, as well as the Local Government Association, instead of attacking the Government should put their own house in order. I sincerely hope that members opposite, their colleagues in another place, and the Local Government Association will properly consider the rights of the ordinary people, who pay rates, and of their spouses, who should at least have the right to vote.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): I congratulate the member for Whyalla and award him an "A" for effort: at least he spoke to the Bill. This is in startling contrast to the lack of interest

shown by the Minister of Local Government, who was absent from this Chamber during the major part of the speech of the member for Light (a speech that I think all members will agree was well worth hearing).

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: I happen to have read it, so I have my opinion on that.

Dr. TONKIN: I think the member for Whyalla said that he saw things in a different light from that of the member for Light and that he looked at things in a different way from that of the member for Torrens; indeed, from the way he spoke, that was pretty obvious. At one stage, when members on this side were speaking to the Bill, I understand that none from the other side intended to speak at all.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's utter rubbish and lies, and you know it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. N. Brookman: Ask for a withdrawal.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Bragg.

Dr. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will not ask for a withdrawal, because the Minister makes these allegations regularly and has no intention ever of withdrawing. I should be surprised at this, if it did not concern the Minister of Roads and Transport, but we have this sort of thing dished up to us every day. When it comes to behaviour in this House, he is a completely irresponsible gentleman, and this was clearly shown by his attitude during the second reading explanation (or during that part of it that did not concern this Bill).

The Minister devoted most of his speech to discussing the introduction of a previous Bill to which, I take it, I would be out of order in referring. He spent much time talking about the omissions in this Bill and said that he was surprised that another Bill was not amended. He said that only two matters were omitted here, and I point out that those two matters represented 135 clauses in the previous Bill. Although the Minister said that he was happy to introduce this measure, I do not think that he was particularly happy; he did not sound it.

Mr. Ferguson: He was a bit rushed.

Dr. TONKIN: I think so, and I do not think that his attitude does him much credit at all. The Minister said that the Bill was introduced because of the Government's decision to omit the two provisions in question. It is rather interesting to note that the Minister gave the impression a little while ago that it

might be a year or two before the measure would be reintroduced. I congratulate the member for Light not only on his excellent speech but on stimulating Government action in this regard. This is another example of what I call constructive opposition; it is one way of getting things done by this Government. Just a little prodding and stimulus, and it is amazing what the Government will do.

I also extend my congratulations to those officers who prepared this Bill so rapidly. The Minister says that he is pleased to meet the request of the Local Government Association: what he really means is that political expediency has forced him to introduce this Bill. He of all Ministers will not give any credit whatever to the Opposition; he of all Ministers cannot afford to give any credit to the Opposition; he has never given us any information or consideration whatever. But this is typical of him; we have come to expect this attitude from him. I repeat that the Minister's second reading explanation was no credit to him. I think members understand and recognize it as the tortured, twisted tirade of a piqued and petulant politician. It was an example of political manoeuvring that indicated no degree of statesmanship. The Minister's explanation showed a lack of knowledge of basic and fundamental courtesies, as well as a lack of management ability, and this was highlighted by his attack on the Local Government Association through his confidential letter to the President (a letter that he widely circulated).

I am grateful to the member for Light for bringing this matter to our notice. This confidential personal letter is typical of the management that we have come to expect from the Minister. I am not really surprised at his action: because the councils and the people they represent did not want the changes that he wanted, and did not agree with him, he was reduced to attacking the Local Government Association. He would like to play Big Brother, a term that could well be used to describe the Minister. He knows what is best; he knows what is best for the people of Adelaide regarding transport; he knows what is best for the people of Adelaide regarding local government; and he knows what is best for local government! The Minister has ignored many amendments suggested by the association. In spite of the attitude of Government members, I pay a tribute to the association, whose aim is the welfare and advancement of local government. Officers of local government generally perform a

Valuable public service and deserve the thanks of the community. I was pleased to hear that there are now amicable relations existing between the Minister and the association, as he is now doing what the association regards as necessary and what he should have done in the first place. I believe that the 17 points which the member for Light has referred to and which are now in the Bill, and the other points that he raised have been well covered by him.

I am especially interested in the section of the Bill relating to social workers in local government. These people play a tremendously important part in community welfare. Social workers give direct counselling and supportive therapy and act in a community sense by helping people to obtain community services from the service organizations available. Health and welfare is very much inter-related. Recently, in company with the Minister of Social Welfare, I spoke at a seminar on this subject. For a long time community health has been the responsibility of the local medical practitioner, the local board of health and the health officer. These men and women have given sterling service to local government. The local board of health has received notifications of infectious diseases, has been available for immunization programmes and has provided many other community services. With the shortage of doctors and other professional people, we find that there has been a change in the methods of medical practice. General practitioners no longer have time to spend with people to give them the supportive therapy and counselling they need. Because of this, the social worker has come to play an important part in community and mental health of people in all areas. In spite of this, there has been a marked increase in mental illness, the rate of juvenile delinquency, drug dependence, and other ailments. Although the Public Health Department and the Mental Health Services have in many aspects taken over the work of the local medical officer and the board of health, obviously the trained social worker must move out into the community.

At the seminar to which I have referred, the Minister of Social Welfare spoke of the new Community Welfare Department and of the regional community centres. I welcome the introduction of these centres, which may possibly be based on local government areas; that could well happen in country districts. As part of this scheme, a social worker must be available at these centres, either working for a council or in conjunction with a council,

or working in conjunction with the local general practitioner and medical clinic. Social workers can help not only with the elderly, which is the field in which they are best known, but also they can concern themselves with problems of juveniles, preventing vandalism, for instance. The member for Unley would agree that the cost to local government in the Unley area of replacing street signs affected by acts of vandalism is exorbitant. The saving in this field alone would more than pay the salary of a trained social worker in each local government area. This would help with the personal problems of ratepayers; it would provide a service for elderly citizens; and it would benefit the entire community.

The change in the Act to be brought about by clause 287 of the Bill was recommended by the Citizens Aid Bureau and the South Australian Council of Social Service, a letter from which states:

Because of the increasing population in South Australia and Adelaide and with the spread of the city and its satellites, S.A.C.O.S.S. and C.A.B. consider decentralization of social welfare is important. It is necessary to bring the services to the people in their area, to increase local awareness, interest and participation in them and to prevent the overloading of Adelaide facilities. There are many needs and these are increasing. Life-line and C.A.B. had a record total of 800 requests for help in the last month.

It is important for the future development of social welfare and local government that powers be granted now to enable local councils and corporations to undertake all fields of social welfare if they should so desire at any time, and that these areas should not be restricted to the aged.

It was heartening indeed at the seminar, which dealt with the future pattern of community development, to see many representatives of local government. I feel sure that these representatives realize the real good that social workers can do in the community. I believe that the subject of homes and services for the aged will need to be considered carefully. Every effort must be made to take advantage of Commonwealth subsidies available in this regard. In certain circumstances, I believe that these services could be improved tremendously. Certainly elderly citizens' centres have received wide acceptance in this State and throughout Australia. Once again, the service that a trained social worker can provide in this field is enormous. The member for Light has pointed out certain disadvantages in these proposals, and I can see that certain matters will have to be considered deeply before councils go into this sphere. Nevertheless, I believe that

by supporting this measure we will give councils an opportunity to enter the field if they decide their entry is warranted and necessary, and if conditions change.

The member for Light has dealt very capably with other clauses in the Bill. I agree with him wholeheartedly in what he has said about the depositing of rubbish on roadsides. I could not agree more that the minimum penalty for this offence should be far greater than \$10. It is a sorry commentary on our way of family life that people tend to leave things where they find them, whether icecream wrappers or cartons, cigarette packets or any other items of rubbish. It is a sorry reflection on us that people do not take the trouble to put their rubbish where it belongs. I will support any amendment that provides for a higher minimum penalty for this offence. Once again, I congratulate the member for Light who I think has contributed much to the debate. I support the Bill.

Mrs. BYRNE (Tea Tree Gully): I, too, support the Bill but, like other members, I wish that we were debating a new Local Government Act. It seems that, as the drafting of the new Act will take some time, it will probably be at least another 12 months before we can debate such legislation. During last session we debated a Bill similar to this except that that Bill included clauses dealing with local government franchise. It is a pity that this subject has been omitted from the present Bill, but its inclusion in the former Bill was the principal reason for the defeat of that measure in another place. The report of the Bill introduced last session in the *House of Assembly Digest* for 1970-71 states:

Introduced into the House of Assembly on February 25, 1971, this Bill sought to make a number of separate amendments to the principal Act. The most important alteration proposed by the Bill to the present law was the introduction of full adult franchise into local government. The greater part of the Bill concerned matters connected with local government franchise and voting but some of the other matters covered by the Bill were the amalgamation of councils; resignation of members of councils and the payment of expenses under certain circumstances to councillors; amendments to enable councils to spend money on the employment of social workers and to provide homes, hospitals, infirmaries, nursing homes, recreation facilities, domiciliary and other services for the aged, handicapped and infirm; the extension of the investment powers of councils; the power for councils to make by-laws regulating the use of parklands including the parking of vehicles in parklands; the collection and disposal of rubbish. The

Bill passed its third reading in the House of Assembly on March 10 but was defeated on the second reading in the Legislative Council.

This defeat was regrettable, because most of its provisions would otherwise have been law now, to the benefit of many members of the community. Many provisions in the Bill before us were recommended by the Local Government Act Revision Committee, because the committee considered that there was a need for them and that reform was necessary to enable local government to enter the fields of domiciliary and other services for the aged, handicapped and infirm. Clause 18 authorizes councils to spend money in the provision of homes, hospitals, infirmaries, nursing homes, recreation facilities, domiciliary services and other services for the aged, handicapped or infirm. This is indeed a good provision.

Like the member for Bragg, I think that for the time being many councils probably will not enter this field, for reasons best known to themselves, some probably financial. However, the provision gives councils the opportunity to enter these fields if they so desire, and I am sure that some will do so immediately, whilst others will do so later. The Bill, by clause 17, also authorizes councils to appoint social workers. The member for Bragg amplified this matter, and I agree with everything he said in that regard.

There is a great need for more social workers in our community, certainly in my district, and at present medical practitioners recognize the need for social work and refer patients to people who can help in this regard. Whereas a social worker would be readily available if employed by a council, this is not the position at present. In some areas, including the Tea Tree Gully District, medical practitioners sometimes contact me (and other members probably have a similar experience), asking me to assist these people. This work is rewarding, but some who undertake it at present are not trained to do so. Time is also involved, because one visit to a person is not sufficient: visits must be followed up so that the work will be effective.

I am also pleased that the provisions of clause 31, which amends section 459a of the principal Act, have been included, giving councils power to dispose of small reserves. In dealing with this matter in his explanation, the Minister stated:

Clause 31 removes this restriction of half an acre. In disposing of reserves, size should not be a determining factor, but rather the usefulness of the reserve for the purpose of



public use or enjoyment. Buildings such as kindergartens have been established on some reserves. The Government does not want to see needed reserves used in this way. However, councils often have surplus reserves, or portions, that could be made available for such purpose. The amendment will permit the disposal of redundant reserves where it is appropriate.

Of course, a similar provision was passed in this House last session but, like the remainder of that Bill, was defeated in another place, thus frustrating some kindergarten committees in their attempts to establish kindergartens. This has certainly caused much harm to one such committee in my district, and has probably harmed committees in other districts also. However, if this Bill is passed, the kindergarten committees desiring to establish kindergartens on such reserves will be able to do so.

I wish to refer to a problem which occurred in the Tea Tree Gully District recently and on which the council did not have power to act. Provision should be made to give this power. On Sunday, April 18 last, a freak storm occurred in the Modbury North part of my district causing a whole roof to be blown off a dwelling and parts of roofs, ceilings and fences to be blown down in other cases. Shrubs and trees were also affected. Powerlines were brought down but, to the credit of the Electricity Trust employees, the lines were replaced quickly.

Some of the debris, such as tiles, wood and iron, were blown onto roadways in front of dwellings and onto footpaths and vacant allotments. The strength of the wind was dangerous, because pedestrians could have been injured, perhaps seriously, by flying debris. Owners and other residents did their best to collect the material, placing it on the empty allotments and putting wood and bricks on it to prevent it from blowing around. Nevertheless, it did blow around again, because the bad weather continued for about a week after that storm. Some tiles and iron were blown on to the road again but, fortunately, no persons were injured.

This occurrence did cause concern and anxiety to residents and I, as member for the district, was also caused much anxiety, because in trying to do anything about the position, I was frustrated as a result of the council's not having the authority to attend to a matter with which I had thought it was the appropriate body to deal. At that time no-one wanted to accept the responsibility. Finally, I contacted the Premier's Department on April 27 (the storm

had occurred on April 18) and, because of the intervention of the Premier's Secretary, the debris was removed by representatives of the insurance company or adjusters. In this type of emergency situation I consider that councils should have power to act immediately and to spend money in these circumstances. Perhaps the money could be recovered later from the insurance company or adjusters, but, even if it could not be recovered, power should be provided in the Act to allow councils to undertake this work in these circumstances. I support the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glennelg): I support the Bill, because it is a great improvement on the Bill which was introduced last session to amend the Local Government Act and which contained what I could call a package deal on franchise. I think it was the thin edge of the wedge regarding franchise. We had no doubt where the previous Bill would lead, and the member for Whyalla left no stone unturned to emphasize this point. It is a pity that this Bill has taken so long to be reintroduced, but from what the Minister said one would have wondered whether it would ever be brought back. I am sure it would have been passed last session if it had contained only similar provisions to those now in this Bill. I have no doubt that it would have passed through both Houses. I am sure this Bill will pass, although I am sure that some amendments are desirable and that the Minister, in the sympathetic way in which he listens to the Opposition, will be delighted to accept some of the foreshadowed amendments.

The SPEAKER: Order! Amendments cannot be considered or discussed at this stage.

Mr. MATHWIN: In this Bill much emphasis is placed on voting for 18-year-olds, and I have no argument on this point. They should be able to vote at council elections provided that they are ratepayers, and not electors as was provided in the previous Bill.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Provided that they buy their votes!

Mr. MATHWIN: As ratepayers they are fully entitled to vote: this Bill excludes the ex-servicemen provision. Clause 17 enables expenditure by councils on the employment of social workers, and this will be to the benefit of young and aged people. I agree with this provision, because nothing but good can come from it.

Clause 18 empowers councils to spend money on homes, hospitals, infirmaries, nursing homes, and similar establishments: there is a

great need in the community for this type of help. The council may spend this revenue: it is not mandatory, but I am sure that this expenditure could be costly and embarrassing to the financial resources of many councils and ratepayers. It could result in a complete overlapping of Commonwealth Government and State Government functions: the passing of the buck, if you like, to councils of what could be a problem area. Councils could help in solving many of these problems with the assistance of Commonwealth and State finance and with the aid of the appropriate voluntary organizations within the district. However, it would be doubtful whether effective or economical services could be provided in many areas by the split control of the three-tier system. Indeed, this probably forms part of the reason for the establishment of a committee to inquire into health services.

Although some councils may seek the power provided in the Bill to put into operation the much needed improvements, the local social welfare scheme, and matters based on local knowledge, other councils consider that the main factor is being by-passed, that is, the responsibility of central and National Governments to provide these services through their extensive financial resources. Councils can assist extensively by providing advice and guidance rather than by providing the operative and financial functions in these matters. One must carefully consider that, although these schemes are desirable, much pressure can be applied to councils and also the revenue obtained from ratepayers. Repealing section 53 leaves a void, because no alternative has been provided. Clause 15 inserts new section 215a (2), which provides:

The rate shall be a fixed amount not exceeding ten dollars in respect of any allotment or parcel of ratable property, and shall be paid by the occupiers of ratable property abutting on any street, road or place through which the service is provided.

Perhaps the Minister would consider including the words "owners or occupiers" in this provision. Clause 22 repeals section 292 (5) and inserts the following new subsection:

The council shall, upon request by a ratepayer for the area, furnish him free of charge with a copy of the statements and balance sheets referred to in sections 296 and 297 of this Act.

Why has the Minister provided that this information should be given free of charge? I know it will probably save publication in the *Gazette*, but I believe there should be some small charge to the ratepayers who obtain this information. Some of the remarks of the member for

Whyalla seemed to be distinctly off the beam. He referred to the New South Wales *Shire and Municipal Record* of April 15 which states:

Thus on the grounds of financial accountability there is less authority by far for extending the full adult franchise for local government elections as opposed to State and Commonwealth jurisdictions.

The honourable member mentioned that the editorial in the municipal record was under the heading of "Compulsory Voting." He said:

That says that there is no better case for more people having a say in local government than there was previously, but that is not correct. Surely the question of greater financial responsibility for councils is linked with franchise.

Is the honourable member saying that we should impose a poll tax on the 15 per cent of people who are not ratepayers? Is he saying that all 18-year-olds, except those who own a property or who are married, should pay a poll tax?

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: He did not say that.

Mr. Brown: I said you were broadening the financial burden.

Mr. MATHWIN: The honourable member suggested that people were not getting their rights as voters because they could not vote in local government elections. I suggest to the member for Whyalla and to the Government that all ratepayers, owners or occupiers get a vote: the only people who do not get a vote are those who do not pay rates. The member for Whyalla suggested that they ought to pay. However, there is only one method of doing that, namely, by paying a poll tax. If the Minister of Education told the truth, he would say that this was the only method.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Are you suggesting that anyone who does not pay Commonwealth or State taxes should not get a vote in Commonwealth or State elections?

Mr. MATHWIN: Anyone who does not pay rates should not be entitled to vote for local government. I have not mentioned Commonwealth or State elections, because I would be ruled out of order if I did. The member for Whyalla joked about the fact that the Local Government Association had just lost three more councils. Of course, the association does not compel councils to belong to it. Therefore, councils please themselves whether or not to join the association. The association can still boast that over 90 per cent of councils, district councils and municipal councils in South Australia belong to it.

Mr. Keneally: That is a misstatement.

Mr. MATHWIN: That is not a misstatement. The *Local Government Journal* states:

The Minister, as reported in the *Advertiser* of Saturday, March 27, can now see no point in reviving the Bill rejected in the Legislative Council. It is not immediately clear whether this purported lack of interest is to be regarded as a stimulus, a punishment or a badly veiled threat, or whether all the benefits that the Minister specifically alluded to as now having been lost to the South Australian public through the action of the Legislative Council, the Local Government Association, the Chamber of Manufactures, and the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce, were really only the sugar coating around the Government's real legislative intentions.

The former Bill defeated in another place was defeated simply because it was a bad Bill. As the Minister realized that public opinion was against him, he did a neat back flip and introduced this more desirable Bill. In a letter sent to the Minister of Local Government, the President of the association (Mr. John Nether-ton) said:

You must be well aware of the hostility expressed by delegates at regional association meetings and at our annual general meeting when you introduced the subject of voting changes, yet you persisted in introducing this unwanted legislation. In this atmosphere it appeared obvious that the Bill should have been divided into two sections.

This Bill is the good section and the section that people want. It is without that little bit of socialism that was sneaked in in the hope that no-one would notice it. However, we are wide awake on this side; we spotted this from a mile off. It had a peculiar smell to it, too. The letter continues:

In this atmosphere it appeared obvious that the Bill should have been divided into two sections—

I repeat this because it is most important that members opposite should understand it—the first part dealing with the controversial issue of adult franchise and the second part dealing with amendments sought, in the main, by this association and individual councils.

There should be no argument about this. The councils were in accord regarding the type of legislation that the Minister is now putting forward. The letter continues:

As the very contentious matter of adult franchise was relative to some 135 clauses in the Bill—

that was 135 clauses out of 161.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member is going to refer to comments by an outside organization, he must link up his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, members throughout the debate have referred to the former Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members have referred to the second reading speech given by the Minister in introducing this Bill. Members have a right to refer to a portion of the Minister's second reading speech but, in order to bring the opinion of outside organizations into a subject matter not contained in the Bill, the honourable member will have to link up his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. COUMBE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker: the member for Whyalla quoted from this letter at some length. I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with due deference that the member for Glenelg is perfectly in order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that, if the honourable member is going to quote from a letter from some outside organization, he must link up his remarks with the Bill. The member for Glenelg.

Mr. MATHWIN: Very well. I think I have explained enough of this letter to the House. In this letter, the President of this association said that the association represented 95.6 per cent of the councils in this State; actually, it is now about 91.4 per cent.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Elected by about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the people.

Mr. MATHWIN: I imagine that the member for Brighton, when he was voting at council elections, would have given me his vote when he went there voluntarily. There are in the Bill several things with which I entirely agree. For depositing rubbish, I think that a minimum fine of \$10 is far too low; I will support its being raised to \$20, or even more, because this is a most important matter. One has to travel only in the city itself to see the number of tins and bottles (and particularly unreturnable bottles, a real curse) deposited at the side of the road, the councils having little opportunity, even if it was worthwhile, of punishing the offenders if they could catch them. The minimum fine should be much greater than \$10.

I am pleased that clause 31 gives councils the right to dispose of small reserves. Councils should be able, in certain circumstances, to dispose of small reserves, particularly if they can give them to voluntary organizations. I know that the councils with which I have had dealings have on previous occasions given over land. For instance, the Glenelg council has

given land to a senior citizens club and also for a Meals on Wheels kitchen. The Brighton council has done likewise: it has prepared land for a senior citizens club and has also given land at a peppercorn rent to the Boy Scouts and other organizations. There is no limit to the size of the reserves that the councils can dispose of. I do not know whether or not this is good thinking, but there would not be a council that would dispose of a reserve of any great size, because areas for organized sport and for children to play on are most important. Most of our councils have few of these even to use, let alone dispose of.

Anyone who has been overseas, and particularly to the United Kingdom, will appreciate the position over there where some of the larger towns in the United Kingdom have streets displaying signs to the effect that they are "playing streets". No motor vehicles are allowed to go down those streets between 8 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., because they are reserved for children to play in as they have no other place in which to play. When we see things like that, we must realize how important it is that we preserve whatever reserves we have and take every opportunity of getting more, if possible.

The member for Whyalla said that members on this side of the House and members of the Local Government Association should consider those people who paid rates. Members on this side and the Local Government Association have always considered those people who pay rates and are termed "ratepayers". I support the Bill.

Mr. PAYNE (Mitchell): I support the Bill. Before I begin to develop my arguments, I should like to correct one or two statements made by the member for Glenelg. He said it was a pity that the Bill was so long in coming back. On the contrary, it is an absolute disgrace that it ever had to come back. The member for Eyre, who is interjecting, always has something to say when he is not on his feet. He has only ever done one thing in this House that I can think of that would do him any good—buying a house in my electoral district; and he knows he is now well represented!

The member for Glenelg said that he agreed with 18-year-olds voting provided they were ratepayers. We know what he means here. The Minister reminded him at the time that, provided they were prepared to buy their vote, he was happy to accept them. The member for Bragg opened his speech with a particu-

larly vitriolic attack on the Minister that was entirely unsupported by any worthwhile evidence. He described the Minister as irresponsible, but he did not produce one whit of fact to back up his statement. This sort of thing is often done by members opposite, and it is time it stopped.

The honourable member tried to decry the speech of the member for Whyalla (thus admitting it was a good speech) by saying that he would give it an "A" for effort but not for content. Evidently the member for Bragg judges speeches by their length; if they are long, they are all right. Since the honourable member always takes the full time available, I suppose he regards his speeches as good. I remind members opposite that the Australian Labor Party prefers quality in speeches and quantity in numbers, and right now we have both. I commend the Minister for his concern for the people throughout all the local government areas that we have heard so much about during this debate. When introducing this Bill the Minister showed his concern for the people of this State, irrespective of the local government area in which they live.

Mr. Coumbe: You'll get on.

Mr. PAYNE: I may, too. I know that Government members will agree with me when I say that the Minister was vilified during debate on the previous Bill for endeavouring to carry out part of the policy on which the Government was elected. He was attacked for trying to do something that all Governments ought to do—carry out their election promises. I am sure that members opposite do not know what that means. The member for Light tried to continue an attack along the same lines. Throughout his speech he made slighting remarks about the Minister. The honourable member referred to some letters and made further scathing remarks about the Minister. He attempted to show that when the previous Local Government Act Amendment Bill was before the House it was too large and awkward to amend in the way that Opposition members desired. What a lot of old codswallop! The honourable member pontificated in his best manner. I inform members opposite that in 1934, after a Local Government Bill had been introduced in the Legislative Council, extensive amendments were made in the Committee stage in this place. The Assembly amendments that remained in dispute between the two Houses were eventually discussed at a conference, and there were 149 such amendments! They had to do it

then, so why could Opposition members not have suggested numerous amendments earlier this year? They could have done that if they were fair dinkum, but they were not. The member for Light quoted a letter, dated April 14, 1971, from Mr. W. J. Netherton, the President of the Local Government Association of South Australia Incorporated. Portion of that letter is as follows:

I assure you that this association will always watch over and protect the interests, rights and privileges of local government.

That is not a bad sort of statement. I remind the member for Light that the Minister has a greater responsibility than the President of the Local Government Association has: the Minister has a responsibility to watch over the interests of all the people, not just one section of the people, as indeed members opposite and Government members have. I hope that Mr. Netherton and his association will at least keep that in mind. His letter continues:

The association, as you know, conducted a survey on the issue of compulsory voting and adult franchise and, as a result of that survey, the association has ample evidence that councillors and the people they represent do not want any change in the existing voting system. What evidence to support that statement has the association ever produced? It is the Government that has evidence relating to this matter. Part of the platform on which the Government was elected related to the matter, but the Local Government Association was not elected on that basis. That is proof.

Mr. Coumbe: You will have to do better than that.

Mr. PAYNE: I will get better as I go along. As we all know, many councillors are elected by 6 per cent, 8 per cent, or sometimes (in a terrific contest) by 10 per cent of the people eligible to vote. So, whom do they represent and where is the evidence that they claim to have? So much for that point. The Local Government Association wrote to me, but I did not receive any details of polls or surveys that had been conducted. Whenever that was said in the letter, it meant "We say"; it was not evidence, and this is not worth the proverbial bumper.

Mr. Mathwin: I thought you were going to be rude.

Mr. PAYNE: One should not judge other people in this House by one's own character.

Mr. Venning: Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. PAYNE: Yes; I will get around to that in a moment. I am trying to refer to a further

paragraph in the letter introduced by the member for Light.

Mr. Mathwin: I was stopped from doing this.

Mr. PAYNE: You are too dumb to get the message over. The paragraph states:

The association reserves the right to use whatever means are available, within propriety, to continue to promote and protect the interests of its members.

I contrast that sentence with the resolution passed at the annual general meeting and reported in volume 5 of the Local Government Association's November/December, 1970, journal. That resolution states:

Resolved unanimously that this annual general meeting give authority to the Executive Committee to take whatever appropriate action it deems necessary to oppose the introduction of adult franchise and compulsory voting for council elections.

Nothing about "within propriety" appears in that resolution. I endorse the statement that the methods used were not always within propriety.

Mr. Coumbe: I think the word "unanimously" was used.

Mr. PAYNE: The word "propriety" is not in that resolution, and we know that it was not used.

Mr. Mathwin: What was the date of the meeting?

Mr. PAYNE: Get out the L.G.A. magazine, which you tell us you read every night before tucking yourself in.

Mr. Mathwin: Not the book of yours?

Mr. PAYNE: No; this is the book you dream by.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member, when addressing himself to other members, must refer to them as the "honourable member" or give their title.

Mr. PAYNE: I apologize; I was carried away by the sheer ferocity of the interjection. I will try to confine myself within your bounds in future. The member for Light detailed a list of 17 points in all from the appendix of Mr. Netherton's letter. His whole line was that, if the item was followed by a comment of approval from the association, it was all right; if there was some other comment, it was no good. As far as I can see, he was saying that it is all right when the L.G.A. tells the Minister what to do but, if it does not tell him, he should not do it. Why not? Does the member for Light think that the L.G.A. is the only body of persons with knowledge of

local government in South Australia? What about the departmental officers concerned? Does he think that they have no knowledge in these matters? What about the Minister? Surely they would grant some leeway here. I cannot work out his reasoning; he maintains that everything the L.G.A. says is all right, except that I think the honourable member thought he should agree with one matter with which the association disagreed, just to balance things out.

Certain remarks of the member for Light seemed to have a ring similar to that of statements coming from another place regarding the permanent will of the people. The remarks in question seemed to have a peculiar ring about them. The Minister himself summarized the situation by saying that there were only five alterations in this Bill, consisting, first, of two omissions, which all members of this side and, I am certain, the majority of the people of this State deplore. I refer to the franchise provisions, and to the right of electors and councils to choose whether compulsory or voluntary voting should apply (not just compulsory voting, as members opposite tried to suggest). I deplore those omissions, but this is the way it must be done at present. The additions in this Bill include the lowering of the voting age provisions because of the 18-year-old requirement; the provisions regarding finance for ceding areas; and rates paid in respect of Government properties in future, whether occupied or not at the time of rating. I am in accord with these measures.

I also strongly support the provisions contained in clauses 17 and 18 pertaining to council expenditure in the field of social welfare, providing for homes, hospitals, infirmaries, and so forth. This is the time and place to put the blame for the months of delay in this matter on the colleagues in another place of members opposite who have delayed the commencement of these issues. This point was canvassed earlier by the member for Tea Tree Gully. The period wasted here is tragic, as it has delayed the entry of councils into this vital field. Some people may no longer be able to receive the assistance provided under these provisions. I remind members opposite and those in the other place of the people for whom local government exists. I think it would be fitting at this time to quote the following editorial of the Local Government Association publication of May/June, 1970, which was some time before it lost that bit of propriety I mentioned earlier:

Contrary to opinion in some quarters, government—  
and obviously local government is included in that remark—

is not an end in itself. It exists solely for the many purposes of the society which maintains it.

This is a point that members opposite and councillors would do well to remember. I support the Bill.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I was interested to hear the member for Mitchell say what he thought of the speech of the member for Light who made an informed speech on the Bill with great clarity. He paid the Minister homage by saying that the legislation would do good things for the State, and that was the tenor of his speech. In introducing his second reading explanation, the Minister set the pattern, which has been followed by his colleagues, by referring to the two basic provisions so dear to his heart that have been omitted from this Bill. It is on the score of those provisions that we differ with Government members. The member for Mitchell said that he was a man of his word, and I do not doubt that. The provisions that have been left out of this Bill are the first step towards unification. I have referred before to the fact that, when making a national broadcast, the Premier said that he believed there should be one Government in the Commonwealth. He spelt out that he was in favour of unification.

Mr. Payne: Is that in the Bill?

Mr. RODDA: No, but I am referring to something the Premier said. He said that, when the State Governments were done away with, we would have regional centres with one super Parliament. That is obviously part and parcel of the Socialist doctrine to which members opposite subscribe. Members opposite do not like what I am saying. There is no better way for them to start their Socialist programme than at the level of local government. Members opposite may have a new definition of their aims, but what they wish to achieve has not been altered, and the two basic provisions to which the Minister referred have only been deferred. We know that the Government looks forward to the day when we will have full franchise for local government.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: And we'll get it. The people of South Australia will eventually demand it.

Mr. RODDA: I am pleased to have the Minister's assurance. I do not know why he did not press on with such a provision in this Bill.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Because of the pig-headed attitude of members of the other place.

Mr. RODDA: It is not a question of pig-headedness at all. The Minister met bitter opposition all around the State.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's untrue.

Mr. RODDA: The member for Mitchell upbraided the President of the Local Government Association (Mr. Netherton). However, Mr. Netherton stated the views of local government in this State, and what he said has been quoted by the member for Light.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Whom do councils represent?

Mr. RODDA: The Minister knows well who represents local government and from whom his department gets its revenue; ratepayers are the substance of local government. The member for Whyalla spoke about the poll tax. I can imagine what people who are not ratepayers think about a poll tax. This is the sort of thing that disturbs Opposition members. As the member for Light dealt in some detail with the subject matter of the Bill, I do not intend to go over that. I am interested in clause 5, which deals with the amalgamation of councils. I will give credit to the Minister where it is due, and the Bill includes matters that will have the support of the Local Government Association. As there are difficulties associated with the amalgamation of councils, this clause will have the blessing of many members of local government. The member for Light having dealt with machinery matters in the Bill, I will not go over them. I support the Bill.

Mr. BURDON (Mount Gambier): I, too, support the Bill. Government members and Opposition members have different reasons for supporting the Bill. The member for Light, who spoke as the Mayor of Gawler and as a district councillor with experience, spent nearly all his speech quoting the correspondence that had passed between the President of the Local Government Association and the Minister. The items contained in this legislation are set out. I consider that the Legislative Council could have amended the Bill introduced last session had it so desired. However, at the behest of the Local Government Association of South Australia, that place took it unto itself to reject the measure without considering it. It ill behoves Opposition members to criticize the Government for introducing the measure now before us, when the Legislative Council could have dealt with the other Bill and given it the

consideration it should have received during the last session, in the same way as the present Bill is being dealt with now.

Over many years many members of the present Government and of the Opposition have canvassed many aspects of the Local Government legislation and have stated that it is necessary for South Australia to have an up-to-date Local Government Act. This Bill, which is part of such legislation, has been recommended by the Local Government Act Revision Committee, which a Labor Government appointed and which will submit its report in due course. The local Government Association is asking that the new legislation be introduced in stages; in other words, that the coming into operation of all aspects should be spread over a period of time. The association has levelled criticism in this regard since the Bill has been introduced.

Having had experience on councils and an inside knowledge of how they function, I am concerned at the way in which every council in South Australia has responded to a letter from the Local Government Association. Every council in the State copied this letter and sent copies to the ratepayers concerned as a letter coming from their local council. This was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Local Government Association to mislead the ratepayers. I do not believe for a moment that the association assessed the views of the ratepayers in the various council areas.

I have always believed that it is the right of an individual, on attaining the age of 18 years, to vote for the State and Commonwealth Parliaments. Further, all people claim that local government is the form of government closest to the people, and I consider that all people within a council area who have attained the voting age should have the right to vote. The voting age has been reduced from 21 years to 18 years and, whilst it has been suggested that persons of this age should be denied the right to vote, I consider that every person in a council area, on attaining the age of 18 years, should have the right to vote at council elections. The member for Whyalla canvassed a certain matter this evening, and I will not comment further on it. It is a matter on which the councils can decide, and probably some councils will consider it.

It is also a fact that the Bill rejected previously by the House of Review denied some of the privileges to local government. The measure now before us is an attempt to assist in the affairs of local government. There

has always been (and there still is) a cry from councils concerning finance. I believe that, if councils provide for the need of the people within their areas, whether it be playgrounds or recreation areas that are used by all the people within the community, it is necessary that these people should have some say in the form of council control in their areas.

The introduction of social workers under the control of councils is designed to take advantage of subsidies that are available to councils from the State and Commonwealth Governments. I believe that these social workers, in association with State and Commonwealth authorities, will provide to the community a facility that is sadly lacking in many areas. Many people work voluntarily in the community and, if a subsidy is available to it, a council should have the right to obtain such a subsidy.

It has been suggested that the Local Government Association represents all councils in the State, but this is not quite correct. I believe that many councils did not make up their own minds. Some councils are now withdrawing from the association. Not only have certain councils left the association but also others have indicated that they will leave, too. I know from what councillors have told me that they now wish they had given more consideration to the previous Bill. Now that the provisions of the Bill have been canvassed throughout the State, together with the knowledge that councillors have in relation to the Bill, I believe it is considered in the community that there was some justification for the Government's introducing the previous Bill. People have come to realize that they were misled by the association that claims to represent them, and that is why we find today that councils throughout the State are withdrawing their support from the association. I believe it is the democratic right of all people within a council area to exercise a democratic vote at council elections.

We know that some councillors (as do councillors in another place) believe in the divine right of the ruling class to govern. This attitude is archaic in our thoughts today, because it is the ordinary people in the State who should have the right to vote and the right to govern. Certain sections of the community should not impose their will on other people who do not have the right to exercise a vote at council, State, or Commonwealth elections. Privilege to certain people has gone by the board for all time. As the Government has

made itself clear regarding its intentions, I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I listened with much interest not only to the Minister's second reading explanation of the Bill but also to honourable members who have spoken. One or two things struck me rather forcibly. One is the number of speakers who have had little or no experience in local government, when on both sides of the House there are members who have had considerable experience in local government. I was struck also by the remarks made about the passage of a previous Bill. I recall asking the Minister some time ago whether he would introduce a Bill which provided the features contained in this Bill but which omitted the contentious clauses dealing with the franchise question. The Minister took a column and a half of *Hansard* to say "No". However, the Minister has now introduced such a Bill. I am pleased that he has now seen the light of day. Accordingly, I support the Bill because I believe that in the clauses of the Bill are measures which are acceptable and which will confer certain benefits on local government bodies throughout the State if they desire to take advantage of them; they are not compelled to take advantage of them. One of the features of the tenets of my Party is that one can do things if one so desires, but one does not have to do them.

I listened with interest to the member for Mount Gambier, who talked about the divine right to govern. He mentioned councillors, and I suppose, being charitable as I always am, that he was referring to members of his council at Mount Gambier, men and women who give up countless hours voluntarily and at great inconvenience to serve the ratepayers of his district. How will that read in the Mount Gambier paper? We in South Australia are proud of the voluntary service given to local government by so many people at great inconvenience to themselves.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Are you saying that every member on the Mount Gambier council belongs to the Liberal Party?

Mr. COUMBE: That is just about typical of the Minister, who wants to compel everyone to do what he wants them to do. If I understood the interjection, which was completely out of order, the Minister would want all members of the Mount Gambier council to be compulsorily elected, to be compelled to attend every council meeting, and possibly to be compulsorily paid. Let us be realistic about the Bill. Those members who have served



in local government know the worth of local government and know the voluntary effort that is put into local and civic affairs by members of local government, who work not on their own behalf but on behalf of the citizens of their town or city, often at great inconvenience to themselves, their families and their pockets, particularly in the case of those members in far-flung country areas.

Mr. Langley: Who are you kidding?

Mr. COURCE: How many years did the member for Unley serve on his local council?

Mr. Langley: None.

Mr. COURCE: That answers my question.

Mr. Langley: I listened—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order, especially when an honourable member is not in his place. The member for Torrens.

Mr. COURCE: I know that the Minister who introduced this Bill has had long experience in local government, and I support the measures he has introduced. However, I decry some of the remarks made by some of his supporters. I listened with great interest to the member for Mitchell when he set out, with very little background, to defend his Minister. I do not know who fed him his information, but it was quite apparent that he knew very little of the workings of local government.

Let us look at the provisions of this Bill. These are the plums that the Local Government Association and the councils throughout the State wanted. They were contained, in the main, in the original Bill, but at the time that Bill was introduced the councils throughout the State objected to other clauses in it and preferred then not to support the Bill in its entirety because they believed it contained certain obnoxious clauses which, in their view, outweighed the benefits conferred by the Bill. As I said earlier before the Minister came into the House, I asked the Minister earlier in the session whether he would introduce this Bill without the contentious clauses about franchise and he said "No". He has now done so, and I am pleased that he has. The three main virtues of this Bill are amply dealt with by the Minister in his second reading explanation, if we can ignore the first one and a half pages of it which are a rehash of what had happened previously and a deliberate attack on another place because of its actions at that time.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It was justifiable.

Mr. COURCE: The Minister is entitled to his view and I am entitled to mine. I will

stand up in this place and say my piece just as long as I am elected to this place; I am entitled to do that. I know that most people in my constituency were opposed last session to the obnoxious clauses on franchise introduced by the Minister. The three main objects of this Bill are worth while. I am particularly interested in the provision dealing with the Walkerville council because I represent the major part of Walkerville; indeed, I represented all of it until the recent redistribution. I know the peculiar problems that have arisen between the Walkerville and the Enfield councils over the acquiring of Vale Park, upon which Judge Johnston has deliberated and which this Bill now seeks to rectify. I support some of the other provisions that have been dealt with by other members. The Bill provides that councils may engage in some specified activities if they so desire. It is important to realize that it is not mandatory for them to do so: they will engage in them only if they desire to do so. This reminds me of some of the remarks of the member for Whyalla last Thursday; the honourable member chastised Councillor Netherton for some of his remarks. The honourable member must have done much research work in getting all those volumes! I am not suggesting that they were supplied to him! The honourable member does not speak very often in this place, but it was a pleasure to hear him last Thursday: his was a well documented speech! Of course, he dropped a couple of clangers, particularly when he said that the greater financial responsibility of councils was linked with the franchise. With whom does the financial responsibility lie in local government? It lies with the ratepayers. In the city of Whyalla there is a growing number of ratepayers, as the honourable member knows.

Mr. Brown: What about the system of minimum rating?

Mr. COURCE: Is the honourable member suggesting that that should be done away with?

Mr. Brown: No.

Mr. COURCE: The principle of minimum rating was introduced to encourage development, as the honourable member should know. A minimum rate is charged for vacant blocks in the hope that dwellings will be built on them. There have been some rather queer happenings in the history of local government. While you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are in the Chair I do not want to refer to any one council, but local government comprises a very worthwhile body of citizens who give of their time freely.

Where would we be without local government? The member for Albert Park served with distinction as a member of an illustrious council. Some years ago the late respected Mr. O'Halloran introduced a Bill on the greater Adelaide scheme, which I opposed. At that time I said that local government was the system closest to the people. It still is, and I hope it always will be.

Mr. Langley: Half of the people would not even know their councillor.

Mr. COUMBE: And in the Unley District they would not even know their local member. Let us forget all the hogwash uttered in the past and let us concentrate on the Bill. The three major items in it will greatly benefit local government. I support the Bill and I hope that those major items will be passed without delay, because they will be to the advantage of councils if they desire to implement them.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Local Government): I notice that, after I had introduced the Bill, the task of taking the adjournment and leading the debate on behalf of the Opposition was relegated to the member for Light, who is not in the Chamber at present—

Mr. Millhouse: Yes he is.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Nevertheless, I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

### PAY-ROLL TAX BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following suggested amendments:

No. 1 Page 3 (clause 3)—After line 9 insert the following definition:

“the tribunal” means the Pay-roll Tax Appeal Tribunal constituted by section 35 of this Act.”

No. 2. Page 10, lines 31 and 32 (clause 12)—Leave out “(other than a technical school or a technical college)”.

No. 3. Page 15, line 12 (clause 15)—Leave out “fourteen” and insert “seven”.

No. 4. Page 23, line 3 (clause 31)—Leave out “Treasurer” and insert “tribunal”.

No. 5. Page 23, line 30 (clause 31)—Leave out “Treasurer” and insert “tribunal”.

No. 6. Page 23, line 31 (clause 31)—Leave out “he” and insert “it”.

No. 7. Page 25, lines 11 to 36 and page 26, lines 1 to 21 (clause 35)—Leave out the clause and insert new clause 35 as follows:

“35. Pay-roll Tax Appeal Tribunal (1) For the purposes of this Act, there shall be a tribunal to be known as the “Pay-roll Tax Appeal Tribunal” which shall consist of the three members, appointed by the Governor of whom—

(a) one shall be an officer as defined in the Public Service Act, 1967, as amended, who shall be chairman of the tribunal;

(b) one shall be a legal practitioner as defined in the Legal Practitioners Act, 1936, as amended; and

(c) one shall be a person, who in the opinion of the Minister has a knowledge of and experience in the commercial application of a law, whether of the Commonwealth or of this State, relating to pay-roll tax.

(2) The Governor may, as occasion requires, appoint such person as he considers fit and proper to act in the place of a member of the tribunal during that member's absence or incapacity.

(3) During the absence or incapacity of a member of the tribunal, the person appointed in accordance with subsection (2) of this section to act in his place, shall be entitled to act in the place of that member and, when so acting, shall be deemed to be a member of the tribunal and, in the case of the person appointed to act in the place of the chairman of the tribunal, shall be deemed to be the chairman of the tribunal.

(4) An appointment made under subsection (2) of this section of a person to act in the place of a member and any exercise by that person of his powers and functions, as such, shall not be questioned on the ground that the occasion for the appointment or for the exercise of the power or function had not arisen or had ceased.

(5) An objection made to the tribunal shall be determined by the tribunal at a sitting convened by the chairman of the tribunal and the chairman of the tribunal shall preside at any such sitting.

(6) A decision concurred in by the majority of the members of the tribunal shall be a decision of the tribunal.

(7) A member of the tribunal shall not, as such, be subject to the Public Service Act, 1967, as amended, but this section does not affect the rights, duties or obligations under that Act of any member of the tribunal who is an officer as defined in that Act.

(8) No act or proceeding of the tribunal shall be invalid on the ground only of any vacancy in the office of any member or of any defect in the appointment of any member.

(9) A member of the tribunal shall, if the Governor thinks fit, be paid such fees or other remuneration as may from time to time be fixed by the Governor and shall be entitled to receive such travelling and other expenses as are from time to time approved by the Minister.

(10) Regulations under this Act may make provision for—

(a) the practice and procedure to be adopted in the conduct of proceedings before the tribunal;

(b) the term of office of members of the tribunal;

- (c) the vacation of office by, or the removal from office of, members of the tribunal and the filling of offices that so become vacant;

and

- (d) the provision of secretarial assistance to the tribunal."

No. 8. Page 26, lines 22 to 25 (clause 36)—Leave out the clause and insert new clause 36 as follows:

"36 . Objections and appeals. (1) Any person required to pay tax who is dissatisfied with the assessment of the Commissioner may—

- (a) within sixty days after the service on him of notice of assessment lodge with the tribunal an objection in writing against the assessment stating fully and in detail the grounds on which he relies;

or

- (b) within sixty days after the service on him of notice of assessment appeal to the Supreme Court.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, where the assessment is an amended assessment, the objector or appellant shall have no further or other right of objection or appeal than he would have had if the amended assessment had not been made, except to the extent to which by reason of the amended assessment a fresh liability in respect of any particular is imposed on him or an existing liability in respect of any particular is increased.

(3) Where such person forwards to the tribunal an objection against the Commissioner's assessment the tribunal after making such inquiries and obtaining such information and advice as it deems proper, may confirm or modify the assessment; and, if such assessment is not confirmed, the amount of tax to be ultimately retained shall be that fixed by the tribunal and the difference shall be refunded by the Commissioner to the person who lodged the objection.

(4) In deciding an objection the tribunal shall not be bound by any rules relating to the admissibility of evidence, but may admit such evidence as to it seems relevant.

(5) Upon the confirmation or modification by the tribunal of the Commissioner's assessment such person or the Commissioner may within sixty days after the decision of the tribunal is communicated to him appeal to the Supreme Court.

(6) A person desirous of appealing from or against any assessment of the Commissioner or against the decision by the tribunal on an objection shall within sixty days after the day on which the Commissioner's assessment or, as the case may be, after the day on which the decision of the tribunal is communicated to him, institute an appeal to the Supreme Court by giving notice in writing to the Commissioner or the person affected by the decision of the tribunal, as the case may be, of his intention to appeal therefrom together with a statement of the grounds of such appeal and, within a further period of fourteen days, lodging with the Supreme Court a petition of appeal.

(7) The court or any judge thereof sitting, in court or in chambers may hear and determine the matter of such appeal and make such order with regard thereto and the costs thereof as shall be just.

(8) At the hearing of any appeal or objection under this Act the person making, the objection or instituting the appeal shall be limited to the grounds stated in his objection or appeal."

No. 9. Page 26, lines 26 to 29 (clause 37)—Leave out the clause and insert new clause 37 as follows:

"37 . Objections and appeals. (1) The fact that an appeal or objection is pending shall not in the meantime interfere with or affect the assessment the subject of the appeal or objection and tax may be recovered on the assessment as if no appeal or objection were pending.

(2) If the assessment is altered on an appeal or objection, a due adjustment shall be made for which purpose amounts paid in excess shall be refunded by the Commissioner and amounts short paid shall be recoverable by the Commissioner as arrears."

No. 10. Page 36, lines 11 to 13 (clause 57)—Leave out all words in these lines.

*Suggested amendment No. 1:*

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

That the Legislative Council's suggested amendment No. 1 be disagreed to.

As suggested amendments Nos. 4 to 9 are connected to this amendment, I point out that, when stating the reasons why the Government disagrees to this amendment, I will be referring also to those amendments. Together, these amendments establish a Pay-roll Tax Appeal Tribunal in place of the Treasurer as the first forum of appeal against an assessment of the Commissioner. I ask members to disagree to the amendments, not because there is anything inherently wrong with the type of tribunal proposed in the amendments but for the reason that the procedure already provided for by this measure is, I suggest, adequate. Under the measure as it stands, a dissatisfied taxpayer has three courses open to him. First, he may appeal directly to the Supreme Court and there have his grievances ventilated. Secondly, he may, if he wishes, seek a relatively speedy and informal hearing by the Treasurer, who in his consideration is guided by the advice and counsel of the Crown Solicitor.

In the exercise of the powers referred to here, the Treasurer will give proper regard to the not inconsiderable body of what might be called "pay-roll tax law" as enunciated by the various boards of review under the Commonwealth Act, as well as that law as developed by authorities under corresponding

laws. There is, in addition, a third course open to the taxpayer if he is dissatisfied with the Treasurer's decision, in that he may still appeal to the Supreme Court. If this Chamber agrees with the suggested amendments, it will have, in effect, interposed a second judicial tribunal in the system, a tribunal whose procedures must necessarily be more expensive and time consuming than the procedures at present proposed.

Mr. Millhouse: It might be more satisfactory, though.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I take it that the honourable member is reflecting on the Supreme Court.

Mr. Millhouse: Of course I'm not.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The honourable member has suggested that this avenue of appeal may be more effective than the Supreme Court.

Mr. Millhouse: I said it might be more satisfactory than other avenues.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I take that as a direct reflection on the Supreme Court. However, the decision of the tribunal will be subject to review in the same manner and in the same circumstances as the decision of the Treasurer will now be subject. With regard to appeal, the original provision should satisfy members opposite because it follows closely the scheme of the first appeal provided for in the gift duties legislation introduced by the former Government. The Government believes that the appeal provisions in the Bill as it left this Chamber are satisfactory and can deal adequately with any situation. Therefore it is unnecessary to agree to these suggested amendments.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: We have not had much time to look at these suggested amendments, which run to four full pages of foolscap.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: They don't mean much.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: They may not mean much to the Minister, but that does not mean that there is not some merit in them. I do not know why the Minister rather than the Treasurer is handling this matter, as the Treasurer could perhaps give a better explanation than the Minister can. I take umbrage at the Minister's reaction to my interjection.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You shouldn't have interjected.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: That is one thing, but the quality of the interjection is another. There is no reason to think that this tribunal may not be more effective to the taxpayer than would be the other avenues available. That

is no reflection on the Supreme Court. The Minister referred to the appeal to the Treasurer and so on. The point he was trying to make in the screed he was reading out was that this would be more expensive than would be those methods of appeal. All I was saying was that nevertheless this might be a more effective appeal.

It is a *quasi* judicial body to consist of a member of the Public Service, a legal practitioner and someone with a knowledge of and experience in the commercial application of law. That is not dissimilar from the Commonwealth taxation boards of review. Obviously the other Chamber has in mind substituting for a board of review in the Commonwealth sphere a similar body in the State sphere. As I see nothing wrong with that, I am certainly not prepared to oppose the suggested amendment on the Minister's explanation, which I do not believe he really understands himself. We have had no opportunity to study the amendment. It may be that, if the Government would give us a little time to study it, we would agree with the conclusion it has reached, but to tell us at 11.30 p.m. and on two minutes' notice that this is no good and to give us no opportunity to consider it is churlish.

Motion carried.

*Suggested amendment No. 2:*

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

That the Legislative Council's suggested amendment No. 2 be agreed to.

Although the words proposed to be left out have been in the Commonwealth Act for a considerable time, I ask the Committee to agree to their deletion, if only on the grounds that they discriminate in an arbitrary way between technical and other secondary schools. The effect of the amendment will be that secondary schools and non-profit technical schools will be exempted from paying the tax. This has not been the case in the past under Commonwealth law, but the Government will accept this amendment.

Motion carried.

*Suggested amendment No. 3:*

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

That the Legislative Council's suggested amendment No. 3 be agreed to.

The effect of this amendment will be to reverse a decision made by this Chamber. This is the alteration from seven days to 14 days in the time for payment of the tax, in which matter I think the Leader was involved. The Government, after considering the matter, is satisfied that because of certain administrative procedures agreed on by the Commissioners, the

period of seven days originally proposed for the making of returns will not bear hardly on the employers concerned. Further, the Government is satisfied that to have in this State a period different from the periods in other States would cause considerable inconvenience to taxpayers. In the circumstances, the Government asks that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): That is an inadequate explanation. If the Minister checks with employers, he will find that a period of seven days in which to get their returns in presents them with an impossible situation. The Deputy Premier should say why the Government does not intend to provide a period of seven days. He knows that the Commissioner applies unofficial days of grace after the statutory time has passed, and he knows that a period of 14 days has been spoken of unofficially in the corridors of this Parliament. Why is a period of seven days now proposed?

The Deputy Premier is submitting that a period of seven days will have to be observed, but he knows that it cannot be, as does anyone connected with administration of the legislation. If the Government intends to support those who administer the legislation, I suppose that is all right: I will not insist that we write in a provision for a period of 14 days, if all persons will not comply with the law. However, it seems peculiar to write in a provision that we do not intend to enforce. I will rely on the common sense of those who administer the legislation. They cannot put employers in a straitjacket or an impossible situation. This Bill raises an additional \$10,000,000 a year in taxation, which is the greatest increase in single taxation that the State has ever had, yet we get this type of explanation.

Mr. Millhouse: From a substitute, too, not from the Treasurer.

Mr. HALL: Yes. We do not absolve the substitute from responsibility to know the substance of the Bill. I can only record in *Hansard* what those who pay the tax know now. If the return cannot be lodged within seven days people must be left to the mercy of the Government to show discretion.

Mr. EVANS: What are the administrative difficulties if the period allowed to lodge returns is 14 days? It is difficult for businesses to lodge returns in seven days.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: It is not desirable for the period in this State to be different from that allowed in other States, which are also legislating to take over this tax from the Commonwealth Government.

Certain administrative arrangements have been made among the various Commissioners, and we do not contemplate the difficulties in collecting the tax that the Leader has foreshadowed. Whether that period will be extended unofficially is another question. I am not aware of any specific difficulties for a taxpayer if the period is seven days, but I see considerable inconvenience if the period is different in each State, in which case confusion would arise.

Mr. EVANS: Although in the Commonwealth legislation the period was seven days, it was never enforced. It was possible not to lodge a return for 14 days before having problems with the Commonwealth department. If, after the period of seven days, action will be taken by the department, difficulties may be experienced. I think the Deputy Premier should say whether or not the leniency shown by the Commonwealth department will be shown by the State.

Mr. BECKER: I oppose the amendment. Seven days is insufficient, because banks and companies in South Australia are compelled under so many laws now to complete so many statistical returns that they cannot all be prepared in time. Even though the Government may intend to allow seven days' grace, private enterprise should be told exactly what is the position.

Motion carried.

*Suggested amendments Nos. 4 to 9:*

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

That the Legislative Council's suggested amendments Nos. 4 to 9 be disagreed to.

These amendments, which relate directly to the first amendment, should be disagreed to for the same reasons.

Motion carried.

*Suggested amendment No. 10:*

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I move:

That the Legislative Council's suggested amendment No. 10 be agreed to.

The amendment does not appear to add anything to the efficacy of the regulation-making power in clause 57. However, the Government asks that it be agreed to.

Motion carried.

The following reason for disagreement to the Legislative Council's suggested amendments Nos. 1 and 4 to 9 was adopted:

Because the Bill already contains adequate provision for appeals.

## ADJOURNMENT

At 11.52 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, September 1, at 2 p.m.