

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, October 27, 1971

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

### CATTLE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

### SECONDHAND MOTOR VEHICLES BILL

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

### HALLETT COVE TO PORT STANVAC RAILWAY EXTENSION BILL

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

### PETITION: WANDEARAH EAST SCHOOL

Mr. VENNING presented a petition from 26 parents of children attending or expecting to attend the Wandearah East Rural School, objecting to the Minister's approval of the closure of the school, because the present enrolment was far in excess of the minimum required, residents concerned with the school had provided necessary modern equipment and teaching aids, and parents objected to the transporting of young children out of the district to a larger school. The petitioners prayed that the decision to close the school at the end of 1971 be reconsidered and that the present use of the school be allowed to continue.

Petition received.

## QUESTIONS

### ABATTOIRS

Mr. HALL: In view of the urgency of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board's regaining its export licence to supply meat to the United States of America and the fact that yesterday the loss of this licence appeared to reduce seriously the price of cattle destined for export, I ask the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Premier, whether he has in his possession the urgent report that the Premier promised me yesterday on this matter.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I do not have the report to which the Premier referred yesterday. However, I can tell the Leader that an inspection of the abattoir took place either yesterday or this morning by the United Kingdom representative, who gave a very good report, and it is expected that Mr. Marshall of the Primary Industry Department will carry out an inspection of the works next Friday. It is believed that, as a result of that inspection, the licence which was cancelled, I think last Friday, will be reinstated.

### EVICCTIONS

Mr. WRIGHT: In the absence of the Premier, will the Deputy Premier authorize an investigation into the threatened eviction of four of my constituents from their houses by Harold Steele Proprietary Limited, in order that a stay of proceedings may be implemented? Alternatively, will he ascertain whether other accommodation can be found by the Housing Trust? I have been contacted by four of my constituents, all of whom have received letters from Harold Steele Proprietary Limited. The letter addressed to Mr. J. and Mrs. E. M. Whennan states:

Dear Sir and Madam:

This company has purchased the property at 340 Gilles Street, now occupied by you. We understand from the previous owners that your rent is \$5 a week and is paid to October 4, 1971. Further rental payments are to be made to this office and we enclose remittance card for you to bring in or to enclose with your next payment. Three weeks will be due on Monday, October 25, 1971, and we shall be pleased if you will pay this on or before that date. As we desire possession of the property we hereby give you one week's notice of the termination of your tenancy, expiring November 1, 1971, and require you to give possession by that date.

The letters, all couched in similar terms, request the tenants to vacate their houses as soon as possible. In total, there is about 70 years' tenancy among the tenants, who are elderly and who obviously have nowhere to go.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will ask the Premier to investigate this as a matter of urgency.

### JUVENILE COURT REPORT

The Hon. D. N. BROOKMAN: Can the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Attorney-General, say whether the Government will release the report of the Juvenile Court magistrate? As honourable members know, this report was not tabled by the Attorney-General because, as I think he put

it, he did not want to see the magistrate dragged into the heat of political conflict and because at the time the Juvenile Courts Bill was before Parliament. Although the Attorney's view was disputed, as the Deputy Premier knows, that view prevailed. Since then, the Bill has been passed as a result of a conference last evening. Both Houses have accepted the terms of the conference settlement, which provides, among other things, that the report of the senior judge shall be given to the Minister and that he shall place it before Parliament. This deals adequately with the position concerning future reports of the senior judge. Indeed, as about 14 of these reports have been tabled in the past as a matter of custom, there will still be one report missing unless the Government is prepared to release the report it recently suppressed. As there seems to be no further point in suppressing the report from the point of view of any political conflict, because the debate has finished, it seems to me that the Government has a moral obligation to table the report, and I ask the Deputy Premier whether he will agree to do so.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I cannot agree to the honourable member's suggestion. During the debate, on several occasions the Attorney-General set out the reasons why he was not prepared to table the report. I do not believe that the situation that has resulted from what transpired last evening alters in any way the reasons given by the Attorney during the debate. As Deputy Premier, I cannot speak for the Attorney-General, but in view of the honourable member's question, I shall be happy to refer it to him and to see whether or not he is prepared to have second thoughts on the matter.

### VANDALISM

Mr. CRIMES: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation, in the absence of the Minister of Roads and Transport, a reply to my question of October 6 about vandalism?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Minister of Roads and Transport states:

I have considered the honourable member's suggestion that posters be displayed to publicize the cost to the community of vandalism to railway property. I think the suggestion has some merit and, as space is available for such posters on suburban rail cars, the Railways Commissioner is now arranging for posters 24in. long and 11in. high with a suitable message printed thereon to be installed as soon as possible.

### BUSH FIRES

Mr. LANGLEY: Has the Minister of Works a reply from the Minister of Agriculture to my recent question as to what the Government intends to do about notifying the public of any bush fire menace that may arise this summer?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Bushfire Research Committee has assured my colleague that this year it will again actively pursue a policy of fire prevention publicity through all available channels. Fire Prevention Week, this week, will serve to focus public attention on the vital need to take extreme care to prevent outbreaks of fire, and appropriate publicity will be given this important matter during the week. The Bushfire Research Committee's 8ft. x 4ft. new reflectorized roadside signs have been distributed to most district councils, and erection is expected to take place in a few days. The report received by my colleague clearly indicates that the assistance of the press, television and radio can be expected in the Bushfire Research Committee's continuing efforts to publicize the need for precautions this season.

### SOLDIER SETTLERS

Mr. CURREN: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Repatriation to take up with the Commonwealth authorities the question of completing the drainage of surrendered properties under the war service land settlement scheme? This question is supplementary to the question I asked yesterday about reallocating surrendered properties to qualified exservicemen. I have received a letter on this subject from the Secretary of the Upper Murray Exservicemen's Land Settlement Association. The association desires that these properties should be reallocated to settlers who are already operating in the scheme. At present, as soon as a property is surrendered it is no longer accepted by the Commonwealth authority as being eligible for the completion of the drainage. Will the Minister ask his colleague to have this position improved?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Certainly.

### RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. JENNINGS: Has the Minister of Environment and Conservation, in the absence of the Minister of Roads and Transport, a reply to my question of September 22 about the housing of railway employees in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: No railway employee in the metropolitan area faces eviction from departmental accommodation. In general,

houses in the metropolitan area are occupied for short-term accommodation, and are not let for extended periods unless the officer or employee is required to occupy a railway house as an integral part of his duty. Officers and employees who transfer from country districts are sometimes accommodated for short terms in vacant railway houses, but are expected to find alternative accommodation as quickly as possible.

### SMART ROAD

Mrs. BYRNE: As the Minister of Roads and Transport is out of the State on Parliamentary business, will the Minister of Environment and Conservation ask him on his return whether the Highways Department will consider altering the design of the median strip in Smart Road, Modbury, between Reservoir Road and North-East Road, so that traffic gaps may be placed in the strip? This median strip has not been completed, but no traffic gaps have been left in its entire length. The median strip in Smart Road between Reservoir Road and Seymour Avenue (adjacent to Myer Tea Tree Plaza and the Modbury Hospital) is about the same length but has three traffic gaps in it. A petition on this matter has been received by the city of Tea Tree Gully, and I have been given a copy and asked to intervene. I can supply the Minister with a copy of the petition, which contains detailed reasons for this request.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I shall be pleased to obtain a report on this matter from my colleague.

### CORONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr. CARNIE (Flinders) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Coroners Act, 1935-1969. Read a first time.

Mr. CARNIE: I move:

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

This short Bill is designed to make it mandatory for an inquest to be held whenever a death occurs involving a motor vehicle. Although it is a short Bill, nevertheless it is one that I believe will have a very far-reaching effect. Road deaths have become an unfortunate part of our way of life. Rarely a day passes in this State without someone dying on our roads. This is a problem which concerns every member of the community, because all of these deaths are needless deaths: not one should have occurred. While it would indeed be Utopian to have the situation where no

road deaths occur, it is the duty of every citizen, including each member of Parliament, to do all in his power towards this end.

Because of these needless deaths there have had to be set up in our communities organizations which do nothing but deal with the problem of road accidents; they study causes and effects, trying to devise ways and means of cutting down on the appalling number of accidents which plague us. The Road Safety Council is one such body which provides a wonderful service to us all by studying and advising, and by making its information available to try to bring home to the people at large what they can do to cut down on the horrible carnage on our roads. But organizations such as this cannot function without the widest possible information. Before statistics can be accurately compiled, access must be had to all available facts relating to as many accidents as possible.

To many people, an inquest is simply to inquire into the cause of death: in most cases this is of course obvious. A few years ago, there was an occasion when multiple deaths occurred as a result of a collision between a car and a train. The coroner involved deemed an inquest unnecessary because, as he said, "It's obvious what happened. They hit a train." Of course they hit a train. But why did they hit it? Was the crossing not clearly marked? Was it in a bad position? Were the brakes of the car ineffective? Was the consumption of alcohol involved? These are the sorts of fact which can be brought out by an in-depth inquiry, which is what an inquest is.

In another serious accident a few months ago, two young men were killed when their high-powered sports car left the road and hit a tree. Again an inquest was deemed unnecessary. However, an inquest could have brought out and made public such facts as whether cars of this type should be sold to young people, whether in fact the car design was safe for any driver, or whether the road construction was properly carried out. These are just some of the facts which can be brought out by a properly conducted judicial inquiry. The report on road safety brought down by the South Australian Government Committee of Inquiry into Road Safety, commonly known as the Pak Poy report, makes the comment on page 71, when referring to accidents in rural areas, that "the extent to which the human element or road factors contributed to these accidents is not known". Inquests into any of these accidents involving

death would have added to our knowledge of these factors.

In the year ended June 30, 1971, 205 motor vehicle accidents involving loss of life occurred in South Australia. Of these, only 73 have been the subject of inquests; 132 accidents involving loss of life were not publicly investigated. I know that all accidents are the subject of reports by the police, but these reports usually suffer from the fact that they are rarely, if ever, made public. Our road accident rate is such, and is increasing at such a rate, that it is obvious that all of the present methods of educating the public are not having the desired effect. From this it is equally obvious that new methods of bringing the facts home to the public must be used.

In saying this, I am not implying that this will be anything like the complete answer—obviously it will not, but it is another means of making all possible information available, both to the appropriate authorities and to the general public. This amendment is not designed to result in more prosecutions for infringement of the law, but it could result in this happening. The report of the Commissioner of Police for 1967-68 states:

It is quite evident that the basic reasons for accidents happening is that far too many people flout the provisions of the Road Traffic Act, mainly by exceeding the speed limits and not giving sufficient attention to their driving. Until this can be impressed on all drivers, there will still be accidents with the attendant deaths and injuries. There is a strong feeling in some quarters that there has been too much talking (lectures and cautions) and insufficient punitive actions (prosecutions) to make offenders aware of the fact that the Road Traffic Act, and its enforcement by the police, is designed to prevent accidents.

Many accidents are often the subject of court action for insurance claims, usually at a much later date—months or, occasionally, years later. After a lapse of time such as this, the memory of even the most reliable witness can become clouded. Surely an investigation of witnesses under oath should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment, and this Bill will ensure that this is done.

It could be said that inquests can cause emotional distress to people who have already suffered from the loss of a loved one in the accident. This is true but, in the light of our road carnage, which is the more important—the feelings of one or two people, or the possibility that the experience gained from a thorough knowledge of this accident, added to the accumulated knowledge of hundreds of others may be the means of helping to save

other lives? The situation may also often arise, particularly in country areas, where the coroner knows the family of the deceased and hesitates to cause further distress to them, although he may really feel that it would be advantageous to conduct an inquest. This Bill will enable him to do so without having the feeling that he is hurting his friends, because he will have no choice.

The law at present provides that the Attorney-General can override the local coroner and order an inquest if he thinks it is warranted, but again too much time may elapse before this is done. It has been said that very often an inquest can serve no purpose—that the causes are obvious. But can this really be said until an inquest has been conducted? I do not think so.

The provisions of the Bill are simple: clause 1 is formal; clause 2 provides for the proclamation of the Act; clause 3 provides that where a coroner has reasonable cause to suspect that any person has died as a result of an accident involving a motor vehicle he should hold an inquest; clause 4 is consequential upon clause 3.

I ask the House to accept this Bill, as I sincerely believe that such a law will help to add to our knowledge of the causes of road accidents and could be the means of saving lives. A public inquiry at the earliest possible time will ensure that all of the facts relating to a fatal accident are publicly recorded as soon as possible—these facts will be available to all of the organizations concerned with road safety. Being public inquiries, inquests may help to bring home to the motoring public, in a way in which other methods have failed to do, the fact that their own and other people's lives are in their hands.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

### STAMP DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (RATES)

Returned from the Legislative Council with the following suggested amendments:

No. 1. Page 11, lines 2 to 6 (clause 12)—Leave out these lines and insert the following:

Exceeds \$12,000 but does not exceed \$15,000—\$150 plus \$2.50 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$12,000.

Exceeds \$15,000 but does not exceed \$100,000—\$225 plus \$1.50 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$15,000.

Exceeds \$100,000—\$1,500 plus \$2.00 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$100,000.

No. 2. Page 11, lines 17 to 20 (clause 12)—Leave out these lines and insert the following:

Exceeds \$12,000 but does not exceed \$15,000—\$150 plus \$2.50 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$12,000.

Exceeds \$15,000 but does not exceed \$100,000—\$225 plus \$1.50 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$15,000.

Exceeds \$100,000—\$1,500 plus \$2.00 for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of so much of that amount as exceeds \$100,000.

No. 3. Page 13, line 27 (clause 13)—After “vehicle” insert:

(not being a motor tractor owned by a primary producer as defined in section 5 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959, as amended, and not being a commercial motor vehicle as defined in that section).

No. 4. Page 13 (clause 13)—After line 43 insert:

Where the value of the motor vehicle (being a motor tractor owned by a primary producer as defined in section 5 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959, as amended, or a commercial motor vehicle as defined in that section).

(d) does not exceed \$1,000—  
for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of that value—\$1.00.

(e) exceeds \$1,000—  
for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of that value—\$1.50.

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I move:

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

I am grateful to the Leader and Opposition members for their co-operation to enable the disagreement between this Chamber and the Legislative Council to be dealt with forthwith so that, if there is a conference, it may take place this evening. The basis of these suggested amendments is that it has been stated in another place that the Treasury officers underestimated the amount of Government revenues that would be derived from the provisions of this Bill, and the other place has therefore amended the provisions relating to the stamp duty on motor vehicle registration and conveyances on land transactions in order to reduce the amount of revenue to be derived.

I have had the figures given by the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council examined by Treasury officers, and they are adamant that the Leader is mistaken and that, in fact, his suggested amendments would reduce by over \$750,000 Government revenues already provided for in the Budget Estimates passed by this Chamber and the Legislative Council. That is not a position that this

Chamber should allow to occur. The Legislative Council is not the House that provides Supply, and a gross interference with measures passed in this Chamber to provide revenues to meet the Estimates of Expenditure passed by this place is an interference by the Upper House in respect of money measures that this Chamber would never normally countenance.

Having had the figures examined and having looked at them, I am satisfied that the Leader has made a series of gross miscalculations in duplicating amounts that he has estimated and in taking into account matters not contained in this Bill or related to the prospective revenues. Therefore, I consider that this Committee should reject the suggested amendments and stick to the Revenue Estimates that have been approved by the Treasury and passed by this Chamber.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): I cannot comment on the accuracy of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition in another place about the yield from this taxation but I can say that, when the Treasurer placed his Budget measures before this Chamber and the Upper House, he did not state the degree of taxation or how it would be applied. He cannot claim that, by introducing the Budget, he has full support to do what he likes by way of percentage adjustments to existing taxation, because however much he may regard these suggested amendments as being contrary to a Budget Paper already passed, the Legislative Council is drawing attention to what I have described previously as a grave departure from the normal taxation practices in South Australia of keeping our taxation at least no higher (if possible, lower) than taxes applying in other States.

In the two areas covered by the suggested amendments, this Government has departed from the procedures that have previously been the basis of development in this State and has involved us in taxation measures that would be greater than those in the other States. As a direct comparison, I point out that the taxation on motor vehicles in this State is substantially higher than that levied in Victoria. How can we expect to offer an attractive base to over-sea people, to people from other States, and to people who live here but have the opportunity to go to another State to further their investment or productive enterprise? How we intend to attract them by telling them that we will tax them more if they remain here is one of the mysteries the secret to which this Government retains to itself.

That has not been explained to the public of South Australia. The Treasurer, by his statement this afternoon, intends to ignore a direct warning that his policies in the original Bill and his action in asking the Committee to reject the suggested amendments are directly contrary to his stated intention to foster the future development of the State.

Motion carried.

The following reason for disagreement was adopted:

Because the suggested amendments unjustifiably and improperly reduce Government revenues provided in the Budget Estimates and passed by both Houses.

Later:

The Legislative Council requested a conference, at which it would be represented by five managers, on its suggested amendments to which the House of Assembly had disagreed.

The House of Assembly granted a conference, to be held in the Legislative Council conference room at 7.45 p.m., at which it would be represented by Messrs. Allen, Dunstan, Hall, Hudson, and Simmons.

At 7.44 p.m. the managers proceeded to the conference, the sitting of the House being suspended. They returned at 3.33 a.m. on Thursday, October 28. The recommendations were as follows:

*As to Suggested Amendment No. 1:*

That the Legislative Council do not further insist thereon but that the House of Assembly make the following amendment in lieu thereof:

Page 11, lines 2 to 6 (clause 12)—Leave out these lines and insert the following:

Exceeds \$12,000, but does not exceed \$30,000—\$150 plus \$2.50 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$12,000 of that amount or value.

Exceeds \$30,000, but does not exceed \$100,000—\$600 plus \$2.75 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$30,000 of that amount or value.

Exceeds \$100,000—\$2,525 plus \$3 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$100,000 of that amount or value.

*As to Suggested Amendment No. 2:*

That the Legislative Council do not further insist thereon but that the House of Assembly make the following amendment in lieu thereof:

Page 11, lines 17 to 20 (clause 12)—Leave out these lines and insert the following:

Exceeds \$12,000, but does not exceed \$30,000—\$150 plus \$2.50 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$12,000 of that value.

Exceeds \$30,000, but does not exceed \$100,000—\$600 plus \$2.75 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$30,000 of that value.

Exceeds \$100,000—\$2,525 plus \$3 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$100,000 of that value.

*As to Suggested Amendment No. 3:*

That the House of Assembly do not further insist on its disagreement and make such amendment in the Bill.

*As to Suggested Amendment No. 4:*

That the Legislative Council do not further insist thereon but that the House of Assembly make the following amendment in lieu thereof:

Page 13 (clause 13)—After line 43 insert:

Where the value of the motor vehicle (being a motor tractor owned by a primary producer as defined in section 5 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959, as amended, or a commercial motor vehicle as defined in that section)—

(d) does not exceed \$1,000—for every \$100 or fractional part of \$100 of that value, \$1.

(e) exceeds \$1,000—\$10 plus \$2 for every \$100, or fractional part of \$100, of the excess over \$1,000 of that value.

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I move:

That the recommendations of the conference be agreed to.

The effect of these amendments is that there has been a reduction in the amount of duty payable on conveyances in respect of rural property up to \$100,000 in value. The effect of this will be to reduce by about \$300,000 the estimated revenues of the State. There had been a dispute between Treasury officers and members of another place concerning the amount of prospective revenue forecast by the Treasury officers from this area of stamp duty taxation.

The possibility has been agreed by Treasury officers that the projected amount of revenue from this area of stamp duties taxation could be exceeded by about \$250,000. It is difficult to make accurate estimates in this area, because the estimates have to be taken from random samples, two of which had been made by the Leader of the Opposition in another place that put the amount of average values at a somewhat higher rate than had been fixed by Treasury officers. The full amount of his estimates could not be agreed by Treasury officers, but a reduction in the amount of taxation rates has been agreed to by the Government on the possibility of a greater sum being collected than was originally forecast by the Treasury. With regard to the proposals relating to motor vehicles, it has been agreed that commercial motor vehicles and motor tractors owned by primary producers should not attract duty at the 2½ per cent rate but only at the 2 per cent rate on the figure over \$1,000.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): The Treasurer has fairly described the proceedings behind the Government's acceptance of these amendments. I emphasize that whether or not the Government's revenue will be depleted will depend on the outcome of the taxation year. If members of the Legislative Council are correct in their estimate that more will be collected than the Government had expected, the Government revenue will in no way be different from the sum forecast. However, if the lower estimate provided by Treasury officials is correct, Government revenue will be affected. At this stage it appears that only by proceeding through the year shall we find out. As a matter of principle in relation to the comparative values between the various States in relation to taxation, I am pleased that in this reduction we have, at least to this extent, moved a little more closely into line with the lower rates that apply in Victoria and New South Wales.

Motion carried.

#### **INDUSTRIAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL (HOURS)**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 20. Page 2357.)

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I oppose the Bill. I think that, before dealing with its details, it would be wise to advert to some of the history of this matter. During the term of office of the Liberal Government between 1968 and 1970, representations were made to that Government about shopping hours in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, and several consultations were held. It is noticeable that the Opposition does not now hold such consultations, but consultations were held and the present Leader of the Opposition, during the course of those consultations, indicated that he personally did not favour the restriction of shopping hours. He would remember the details of those conversations, which were recorded.

However, after consultation with retail trading organizations in South Australia, his Minister of Labour and Industry introduced a Bill to amend the Early Closing Act in respect of shop trading hours. The then Government courageously took no action on shopping hours! All this vaunted advocacy of freedom, all this talk about doing away with restrictions providing for the average citizen the times during which he wanted to be able to trade, and all the concern for the service to the public, regardless of the difficulties of traders or shop assistants, seemed to have counted for nothing

at that time. The problem facing the Government was that it had the responsibility of government: it was so courageous that it decided to do nothing! However, when this Government took office an election had intervened at which the Leader in his policy speech as Premier at that time again said nothing on this matter. However, the Labor Party said something in its policy speech: we said that we believed that Saturday afternoon and Sunday trading should be ended, that there should be no extension of Friday evening shopping, and that we should retain the *status quo*.

We were the only people to put a policy at the last election. When we had been in office for some months it became clear that the policy of containing Friday evening shopping to the existing free shopping areas would not work, because grave harm was being done to traders in the restricted area who were losing custom to the area immediately outside the Early Closing Act area. It also became clear that we would not be able to contain the situation. In fact, the law would be widely defied while there was a lack of uniformity in trading hour provisions, and this is what the retail traders constantly assert. It is sheer and utter naiveté and nonsense for anyone to contend that the competitors of the major traders can open while the major traders choose not to open; it is commercially impossible for that situation to occur. Once a major competitor opens, it is necessary for the other traders to open simply in order to retain their customers, even though the costs to them of such opening are severe.

Retail traders today talk in the most contemptuous terms of the suggestions that have emanated from the Opposition benches, namely, that it is all right simply to have an open slather on hours and that people should be able to open if they want to, and if they do not want to open they do not have to open. However, they are forced into opening if their competitors open. So there is no question whether from the point of view of one's own private wish one opens or does not open or the cost to one's organization if one opens or does not open: if a single competitor opens, it is necessary to compete by opening in order to retain the trade one already has. It became clear that we would have to establish uniformity in the metropolitan area. There was no grave argument about Saturday afternoon and Sunday trading, about which there had been a clear undertaking in the Labor Party's policy speech. Therefore, no question of that kind needed to be put to voters; nor is there any

agitation about it now, even though the Leader of the Opposition says publicly that he would rather that there was no restriction on shopping hours and that there was a complete open slather.

There was no agitation for Saturday afternoon and Sunday trading in retail trade in South Australia, but there remained a lack of uniformity on Friday evening shopping. If we were to get uniformity, it was clear that the voters of South Australia had to be given the right to make a clear choice in the area affected, namely, the Metropolitan Adelaide Development Plan area, and it was necessary that, since it had been impossible for voters at the poll to make clear their wishes, they be given the right to decide. The one thing the Government had had shown to it effectively since being in office about the policy it had enunciated prior to the election was that there had to be uniformity and that anything short of uniformity would not work and would leave a continuing and running sore. We put the referendum on that question.

True, the Leader of the Opposition suggested various other questions, none of which would have achieved the objective with which he has now introduced the Bill; nor would they have clarified the issue: they would only have made it *obscurus*. Having failed in that, the Leader of the Opposition campaigned for a "Yes" vote. The Government did not take part in the referendum campaign, but simply left it to the voters to express their opinions. They did that, and most of the voters on the issue of uniform trading hours for Friday evening voted "No". That was an instruction to this Government which the Government was obliged to accept, and so we accepted it.

In consequence, provision was made for uniform closing that excluded Friday evening trading. The Leader of the Opposition has now introduced a Bill that provides for no new condition. It does not provide for maintenance of the previous *status quo* or for a return to divided trading hours for which some members at one time contended. Apparently having given that away, they are now not contending for opening in the outer areas and closing in the inner areas. They are urging Government members representing the outer metropolitan area to vote in accordance with the view expressed by most of their electors at that time while, apparently, they urge on Opposition members who represent areas that voted heavily "No" in the referendum campaign that they should ignore what their constituents voted for. Consistency has never been an obvious

virtue of Opposition members, so we can expect this sort of campaign from them.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Particularly where voting majorities have spoken on such an issue as this one.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No. Voting majorities have never enthused them. Now the Leader chooses to ignore what was the result of the referendum and apparently we are to have Friday evening shopping in the whole of the Metropolitan Adelaide Development Plan area, regardless of the result of the referendum. The Government cannot accede to that position. I believe (and I think there is considerable evidence of it) that there is a demand by the public for additional shopping facilities, and that the Government is not averse to that. Indeed, this Government has been in the forefront of removing restrictions on services and forms of behaviour in South Australia in the whole term of its office. If any change is to be made, it must be made on the basis that there is adequate protection for the workers and traders involved and, what is more, it must be made on the basis that action be taken in such a way as to minimize cost increases to the public. We often hear from members opposite that this Government is not concerned with cost increases that force up wages and prices in South Australia and deprive us of our competitive cost advantage.

Mr. Evans: Where's that?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: There is a competitive cost advantage and, if the honourable member likes to analyse it, I suggest that he talk to the directors of Wilkins Servis Proprietary Limited.

Mr. Evans: Have prices come down in Elizabeth since the restricted trading hours were introduced?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will answer that, because obviously the honourable member has not done his homework. While there was a situation in the outer metropolitan area which allowed a high turnover in after-hours trading (because it was the only area open), obviously the costs were not excessive; but if the whole metropolitan area were to open, does the honourable member seriously think that people in the inner metropolitan area would go to Elizabeth rather than to Rundle Street? The fact is that the previous turnover in those areas will now be spread over the whole metropolitan area and, if the honourable member does not think that that will increase costs, let him look at the calculations made by the Retail Traders Association. Does the honourable member really think that members of the



association are in business merely for their health? They are in it to make a quid. I wish he would talk to them because, having done their calculations, they know perfectly well that they are not going to sell markedly more goods in total but that they are going to have higher costs in selling their present total. The honourable member surely does not think that, by opening shops for longer hours at the penalty rates that would be involved, there would be more money in the community to purchase a set quantity of goods in the shops. Where does the money come from that is going to buy these extra goods? There is still the same amount in people's pockets.

Mr. Venning: It's a way of life.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If it is a way of life it is going to be a way of life purchased at greater cost. It may be that the community is prepared to accept a greater cost, but this Government is concerned to ensure that that greater cost is minimized and that the way any extended trading hours occur should be at the minimal cost to the community. The Leader has not bothered about that at all. As far as he is concerned, we can have open slather; he says that it will not cost the community any extra and that it will be better for everyone. I assure the Leader that the Government is not leaving this matter untouched.

Mr. Evans: You can't afford to.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Government cannot only not afford to leave untouched a matter that is of concern to the general community, but it so happens that any matter of general concern to the general community is also a matter of concern to this Government. As members opposite will know, we have been having consultations with the workers' organizations and with the trading organizations concerned to see what is the future of this matter in order to reconcile all the demands that are made by them.

Mr. Venning: You've got yourself into a mess.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If the honourable member thinks that, I suggest he look in his own little nest.

Mr. Venning: It's never been better.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member's capacity for self delusion is infinite. I assure the Leader that action will be taken on this matter, and it will be taken in a way that maximizes the benefits and protections for every sector of the community

involved. When that has been done and when general agreement has been reached, action will be taken by the Government. However, if the Leader thinks that he will get the shop assistants and the traders to agree to a measure that simply brings in Friday evening trading without those provisions, he does not begin to realize what sort of a hornet's nest he will stir up—and stir up with reason! The Government does not intend to accede to this proposal. During this session certain amendments to the Industrial Code will be introduced, and amongst those amendments will be matters that deal with this question. In the meantime, the Government opposes the Bill.

Dr. EASTICK (Light): We have just heard from the Premier the historical background of the situation, but in my opinion much of it was hysterical. We have had what I might be permitted to term the Dunstan interpretation of the Labor Party's version of the position. We have heard about discussions and consultations and have been told that when we were in Government we did nothing about the matter. The Premier would know that, whilst we did not solve the problem, we were advancing towards a solution. He said that, if we were to introduce extended trading hours, we would force every person concerned to extend his trading hours. But this was not the case in those areas which until recently had extended trading hours; indeed, it was a matter involving an individual decision, and this was indicated when one travelled through the areas concerned. Some shops had their doors closed, whereas other shops in the same district that provided the same services were open. No compulsion was placed on any individual, and the owner had the right to decide. There could be no suggestion that such a situation would not occur again. However, the electors had to be given the right to decide, and so Big Brother, in the form of the Australian Labor Party (South Australian Branch) now in Government, decided that there should be a referendum.

Mr. Mathwin: And a compulsory referendum at that.

Dr. EASTICK: Of course; compulsory in forcing people to the poll but failing to be compulsory after the poll, as has been shown by the history of the lack of action taken against those who saw fit not to vote. The Premier indicated that we had to have uniformity, but uniformity as he and his Party wanted it. He said that the alternative questions proposed by the Leader, when we

were discussing a Bill for a referendum, were not correct. The correct question was that proposed by the Government, but that was no different from the question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?", because either "Yes" or "No" as a reply would be wrong. The result of the referendum was an instruction to many members of this House.

Mr. Coumbe: And an embarrassing one, too.

Dr. EASTICK: Of course, as the members for Elizabeth, Tea Tree Gully, Playford, and Salisbury will recall from the Elizabeth meeting that was attended by a capacity audience. The members for Ross Smith and Florey also attended, and the member for Florey could not contain himself, because some people on the stage were receiving their just deserts from the audience, which seemed not to have the same opinion as that of the member for Florey.

Mr. McRae: He didn't do anything unpleasant.

Dr. EASTICK: No, he did not, but I think he would have liked to. He was much to the fore in defending a certain member whom he subsequently defended in this House, although in that defence his reference to weight and other matters was an embarrassment to the member for Tea Tree Gully. The Premier said that the Leader, in calling for an open vote, was not consistent and that consistency was not a virtue of the Opposition. The Premier should know, because he has been in Opposition for a longer period in his Parliamentary career than he has been in Government, that consistency is not a virtue of his Party.

I liken the present situation to the system used by the frog and the fish in their propagation. The female of the species propagates by producing spawn, which is put about and subsequently fertilized by another member of the species. In the present situation, long before the Leader of the Opposition gave notice last Wednesday that he would introduce a Bill to allow shops to open on Friday evenings, the Premier and his friends had been putting about a method whereby they could relieve themselves of the difficult political, economic, and practical problem that they had brought on themselves by deciding to prohibit Friday evening shopping. Apparently, behind the scenes they were moving to make it possible for a change of heart and were preparing for the day when they could go to the public and say, "Look what good people we are: we realize we were wrong and have now corrected the situation,

and you can have Friday evening shopping back." I ask Government members to deny the fact that, long before the Leader introduced this Bill last Wednesday, moves were afoot in the community to organize and replace the situation that had been present in this State since April 18, when Friday evening shopping was lost.

Mr. Jennings: That is not true.

Dr. EASTICK: Apparently, this matter has been discussed at a host of levels—union, Party, or group. The Premier has said today that he will have no part of this legislation, because this, that, and some other measure has to be decided. I am not suggesting that several measures do not have to be decided, but many of them are resolvable because of the provisions of the present Industrial Code and because of the arrangements that exist between employers and employees. No-one has suggested that those who provide a service on Friday evenings should not receive over-award payments that take into account the hours they work. In the past they were not prevented from receiving overtime or from enjoying considerations that they found suitable to their needs, and they have not been, and are not being, asked by my Leader and my Party to work without receiving just recompense.

The Premier has said that it is important that the total costing of this exercise should be calculated. We should be fooling ourselves if we believed that, in the exercise leading up to the referendum in September, 1970, and in the months that have passed since then, retailers and employers have not considered the difficulties that would apply if they were asked to open shops. Today, the Premier has drawn a red herring, thrown up a smokescreen, and tried to walk away from the responsibility of permitting this measure to be decided now.

Mr. Jennings: Aren't you getting your metaphors mixed up?

Dr. EASTICK: I like to hear members opposite voice their opinions; it seems that interjections are their only means of opening their mouths. We do not hear much from them in debate, although we hear lots about what they have said in other places. They tell us they believe this and that, but they are not permitted to say it for fear of expulsion.

Mr. Rodda: Is that their instruction?

Dr. EASTICK: I am sure it is. I hope we hear from them in this debate; I hope they will say what they intend to do to represent the people who have given them the instruction. The Premier asked whether we honestly believed that people would go to Elizabeth

rather than to Rundle Street if shopping were available in both areas. Other members and I can assure the Premier that, although it may be more convenient for some people to travel a shorter distance to Rundle Street, given the opportunity many people would by-pass Rundle Street on a Friday evening to enjoy the carnival atmosphere of shopping at Elizabeth, Christies Beach or places nearby.

Mr. Hopgood: Why shouldn't Rundle Street have a carnival atmosphere?

Dr. EASTICK: If people in Rundle Street are prepared to make the effort to draw people there, they may do so. I think that the member for Mawson is forgetting the situation that previously existed in his area and at Elizabeth, where people enjoyed the family atmosphere that prevailed. They enjoyed the opportunity of taking their toddler children, dressed in pyjamas and dressing gowns, around the stores. I am certain that the member for Elizabeth would not deny that. I do not think the member for Playford would deny it, if he ever enjoyed this facility on Friday evening at Elizabeth. Many people have previously told me that they enjoyed the opportunity to move about as a family in this carnival atmosphere and that they would like to do it again in the future. I drew the parallel between this situation and that of the fish and the frog. I hope the Premier has a change of heart and is prepared to see that the gestation of this measure is short and that the parturition is rapid and painless.

Mr. McRAE (Playford): First, I assure the member for Light that I am well aware of the conditions that used to prevail at Elizabeth on Friday evening. I pardon members on both sides who have not had the opportunity to go there and who are ignorant of this fact: there was a carnival atmosphere. In fact, many people went there not to shop at all but to have a family outing, as the honourable member said. They would have a cup of coffee, meet their friends and so on. Friday evening for the people of Elizabeth was indeed most important: no-one is more aware of that than are the member for Elizabeth and I. However, the situation at Elizabeth is completely different from that at Gawler, where I might venture to say that no carnival atmosphere prevailed because the circumstances were completely different. Nevertheless, while Friday evening trading was permitted at Elizabeth, the people of the district regarded it as a great advantage indeed. It was a great convenience for them not only in terms of shopping but also in

terms of a family evening out, and I know that from speaking to people in my district, especially to young married people who are making a start in life.

They cannot have two motor cars and, as the wife was left at home with the young children throughout the week, Friday evening was something to which she looked forward. This pleasure has now been removed. Let me make no bones about it: the member for Elizabeth and I have always deplored the removal of Friday evening shopping from our districts.

Mr. Rodda: Are you—

Mr. McRAE: There is no point in members opposite interjecting, because I have stated my position before in the House.

Mr. Rodda: Will you support the Bill?

Mr. McRAE: I will get around to that in a minute; I will leave members in suspense for the time being. I have not been gagged from saying what I have said about Friday evening shopping, nor has a gag been put on the members for Elizabeth and Tea Tree Gully. Let us clear that up for a start. The member for Light is correct when he says that Friday evening shopping was important for the people of Elizabeth not only because it was an occasion to shop but also because it was a carnival and a family occasion, something that they were sad to see go. As a member representing large sections of Elizabeth and surrounds, I was also sad to see it go, and I have never hidden that fact either here or anywhere else.

Surely the member for Light is not serious when he suggests that I have made statements elsewhere that I have not had the courage to make here, because he knows that is not correct. I have made my attitude clear throughout, and I have been perfectly consistent. However, as the Premier has said, we must see the whole thing in perspective. It is really not good enough to use this Bill as a vehicle for further embarrassment for Labor members who happen to represent the fringe areas we are discussing. Surely the key to the situation is to decide what is best for everyone in the community.

I begin by taking the point made by the Premier. In the period between 1968 and 1970 when the Liberal and Country League Government was in office, it was well aware of the clouds gathering on the horizon. Indeed, the clouds had more than gathered: rain had begun to fall, but the Government deliberately did nothing about Friday evening shopping. Both the then Premier and his Minister of Labour and Industry were well aware of these things, but they deliberately did not touch

the problem because the potato was too hot to handle and because they could not solve the problem. One reason why they could not find a solution was that they had not done sufficient ground work to produce a solution. In any event, there was a split in the Cabinet as to what should be done. The Leader's comments today and on previous occasions have been contrary to the views of all other sectors of the community.

He has said that there should be open slather on trading, but does he and other members opposite realize what this would lead to? That idea has been tried in other parts of the world. In some States of America the shops are open day and night, seven days a week, but the community pays a price for that. We do not want that situation here. Indeed, they want to get out of it.

The Leader's general philosophy has frightened retail traders, the Shop Assistants Union and the public, and therefore his own Cabinet and his colleagues could not support it. I am suggesting that it was because of this conflict, in addition to the other things I have mentioned, that they were unable to produce a solution. Then, having reached the Opposition benches, the deep divisions between them could be hidden under a barrage of questions to the then Government, which was handling the potato that they themselves considered too hot to touch. The problem of shopping hours is one of balancing the privilege and the convenience of three groups in the community: the consumer, the employee, and the trader.

Prior to the 1970 election, in the fringe areas such as Elizabeth there was considerable convenience for the consumer and for the trader but there was not much convenience for the shop assistant. The member for Light is wrong in saying that the existing legislation is now or was then capable of remedying the complaints of the Shop Assistants Union. This situation was unjust to all the other traders in the State, but as a member for the area that would not have worried me; I would have been delighted at a situation in which the traders in my area had such a significant advantage over the other traders in the metropolitan area and in which all the consumers had such a significant advantage over the other consumers, but could I, as a person supposedly representing the interests of the State as well as of a district, stand up and say that such a system could be maintained? Could I honestly say that, in the interests of the State? As a member for the area, I could say that joy-

fully, but surely as a person representing the State I could not attempt to justify it.

When the new Government took office the storm was already under way and the pressures were applied immediately on the new Government from retail traders on the fringe of the late closing areas. Unless the Government had done something, this State would have been faced with the ridiculous situation that applied in New South Wales some years ago where some traders, because of arbitrary boundary lines, were forced in their economic interests to open contrary to the law, and as a result of this they were charged and convicted.

Dr. Eastick: One died in gaol.

Mr. McRAE: Yes; as the honourable member said, one died in gaol. That situation could not be allowed to occur here. Whatever happened, something had to be done to make the position uniform. The questions in the referendum have been criticized many times, and I believe it is conceivable that a number of other questions could have been added to the referendum paper, but it would have been difficult to analyse the results. If there are two questions with two possible answers to each of them, it is fairly easy to sort out what the majority opinion is, but if there are five or six questions, or more, I fail to see how one could possibly ascertain, by computer or otherwise, what was the majority opinion. The criticism of the questions in the referendum I utterly reject. I personally object strongly to some of the tactics that were used around the referendum, not the referendum itself, when the Trading Hours Steering Committee used a most misleading campaign to induce people to fear that if they voted in favour of Friday evening shopping they would lose Saturday morning shopping.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, the advertisement that appeared in the *News* the day before the referendum and then again in the *Advertiser* on the morning of the referendum showing one housewife talking to another over the fence and saying, "I wonder will Saturday morning be taken next?" That campaign by traders, who had large funds at their disposal, was most unfair not only to my constituents and to the constituents of my colleagues in the surrounding areas but also to everybody in the community, and the community is now becoming aware of this. Having been misled by this wrongful advertising, people were then further confused by statements and advertisements made by pressure groups. People who wanted to present a reasonable case for a "Yes" vote did not have the financial resources to do so. Even the Leader of the Opposition, who I

believe would be much better able to gain funds than would back-bench members on this side, was unable to do anything better than get a 10.30 slot on channel 10 one evening. I object strongly to the circumstances that surrounded that referendum, the result of which is now known and which was followed by a series of somewhat infamous meetings.

Dr. Eastick: The one at Klemzig?

Mr. McRAE: I am not referring to the meeting at Klemzig: that came later. I am referring to the meeting at the Octagon Theatre. I was prepared to take it all with good humour, because I adopted the view that, as I had been frank and honest with my constituents, I had nothing to worry about. As for my being upset because they hissed and booed, that is ridiculous. As the honourable member knows, when my constituents are angry they are capable of throwing a few tomatoes. In fact, we thought we got out of it fairly lightly.

Mr. Venning: What about eggs?

Mr. McRAE: I have not yet had eggs thrown at me. We get on well out there. We have our own customs, and I and my colleague from Elizabeth would be far more acceptable in our districts than would any of the members opposite (notwithstanding their great virtues, which are well known to me), as we are capable of mixing with and dealing with our own people in our own straightforward way. We told no lies; we have nothing to fear. I object to the suggestion that the member for Florey in some way disgraced himself that evening. He became slightly agitated when a member of the audience made a vicious remark about the member for Tea Tree Gully, but all he did was slap the stage to draw the attention of the chairman, Mr. Duffield, to the fact that there was some impolite behaviour going on in one corner of the hall. On behalf of my colleague, I utterly reject the suggestion that he acted with anything but the greatest propriety. Then we have that famous secret meeting that was publicized throughout South Australia and, indeed, throughout Australia.

Dr. Eastick: Who instructed whom in that case?

Mr. McRAE: No-one instructed anyone else. The honourable member seems to think that the fringe area members here are somehow speaking in terror. Certainly, I am not speaking in terror. I hope I do not seem to be terrified: I am quite happy. So far as I could see at the meeting, no-one instructed anyone else. It was a polite and friendly discussion and it was much better than the meeting at the Octagon Theatre, which was a rather rowdy and ugly

performance, although not as bad as we have had on some other issues. That is the clue to what the member for Light was speaking about.

Obviously, we find a solution in a calm atmosphere, unlike the tactics of some of the honourable member's Party colleagues in Salisbury East and Elizabeth, who are all well known to me. I am on good friendly terms with them, and I know all the branch secretaries in the area. In fact, they call in to see me occasionally. I explained to them that, unlike the tactics adopted by their Party, I had been adopting calm and polite tactics and had been received well everywhere by the Shop Assistants Union, the Retail Traders Association, and the public. As the Premier has said, we will work out a solution, but it must be worked out in this friendly atmosphere.

Mr. McNaney: Will the Trades Hall agree with you?

Mr. McRAE: It is not a question of the trade unions agreeing with me.

Mr. Evans: Is it one of your agreeing with the trade unions?

Mr. McRAE: No, it is not that, either. Often some trade unions and I have little disagreements, but we put these petty disagreements aside. As the member for Torrens knows, I do not see eye to eye with a couple of trade unions and they do not see eye to eye with me, but the whole trade union movement and I are on the best of terms. I am on the best of terms with the Shop Assistants Union. In this calm atmosphere, we will produce a result.

Mr. Coumbe: Will there be 10 per cent?

Mr. McRAE: I am not referring to penalty rates.

Mr. Mathwin: You sound like a disciple.

Mr. McRAE: A disciple of whom? I think that stumps the honourable member. We will produce a result when we get something uniform, but not otherwise. I think the Premier has made that clear. I oppose this Bill not because I dislike its sentiments but because it will produce the same problems again. We must make sure that the price paid is not too high, and I for one will not accept lightly the prices put forward by the Retail Traders Association. Believe me, in the past I have had much to do with that association, as the former Minister of Labour and Industry, the member for Torrens, knows, and I will not accept that these vast profiteers cannot make some small reduction in their prices for the benefit of the people of South Australia. If they must pay some extra penalty rates, as

they did in the case of the Shop Assistants Union, I for one will not lightly see them jack up their prices. I need only refer honourable members to the investigations into the oil industry, which show that we have been taken for a ride for too long by the merchants in this country.

Mr. McAnaney: What have prices to do with this Bill?

Mr. McRAE: Prices have everything to do with it. The trade unions have been saying all along, "It is all very well for you to say that our wages should be fixed, but you then allow manufacturers and merchants in our community to fix their own prices, regardless." That procedure is wrong and should not happen, and in this State, where we have price control, I for one, not as a person who is gagged (and I do not sound like a person who is gagged), will be asking the Ministers on the front bench for an assurance that there will be a full-scale investigation of the price structure of these companies, so that the public will not be fleeced again as they have been in the past. Honourable members opposite are incapable of denying any of my propositions, because they know that these propositions are correct.

The shop assistant is entitled to a fair go, but he is getting a very poor go. Unlike the situation suggested by the member for Light, the provisions of the Industrial Code are such, as the member for Torrens well knows, that the court cannot provide that the shop assistants shall work eight hours a day on five consecutive days of the week and follow that up with normal penalties. I know this because I have checked all the *South Australian Industrial Reports*, which show that in the last 40 years, although there have been 40 separate applications by the Shop Assistants Union for these conditions, the union has been unable to gain them. The court has said, "We cannot give you what you would otherwise get and what other employees get, because the Government fixes the hours of trading and we must take those hours of trading as being the ordinary hours of work." When the member for Torrens speaks, I am sure he will confirm what I have said.

I hope that soon, by calm and rational discussion amongst the retail traders, the shop assistants, and people in the community, we will get, on a uniform basis, extended trading hours that will not be to the detriment of anyone. I do not want to see a return to the old preferential system, even though, as the

member for the district, I would love to see it there: that would really float my colours high, but, as a responsible person in the community, I could not really justify it.

I should like to see included in the amendments to the Industrial Code, which must be introduced because many other matters were foreshadowed in His Excellency's Opening Speech, an amendment to provide for wage justice for shop assistants. I, for one, would insist that there be such a provision in the Industrial Code. Having granted wage justice to the shop assistants, I would then go further to see that, for the protection of the public, the situation of the retail traders was examined closely.

I repeat that we in this country have been fleeced in past years by enormous price charges imposed on all of us, the constituents of country members as well as those of city members. Opposition members who in the past have attacked price control would do well to consider the latest report by the commissioner who inquired into petrol prices. That report stated factually that the mark-up was 100 per cent more than could be justified. I want that situation examined closely.

Provided all those things are done, I do not see why we cannot have back the bright lights of Elizabeth and its carnival atmosphere and, more important, get back to the situation where women with small children have the opportunity to shop with their families in comfort and meet their friends, as has been suggested. I support the general philosophy of giving Friday evening shopping to Elizabeth. However, in the circumstances of the Leader's Bill, I regret that I must oppose it.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE (Minister of Labour and Industry): I am surprised that Opposition members are not supporting their Leader. In his second reading explanation the Leader said that it was his personal belief that there should be no restrictions on shopping hours. Judging by the support he is getting from his colleagues, I am inclined to agree with him. I am sure that his colleagues in the inner metropolitan areas, where there was a very sound "No" vote at the referendum, would not share the Leader's personal belief. I suppose we have an advantage over the Leader and other Opposition members because we have been continually watching the trading hours situation since Friday evening trading was discontinued.

Mr. McAnaney: You knew you had made a mistake.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: We did not make a mistake: there was a referendum. We took a very democratic action and introduced legislation according to the wishes of most people at that time. We now have, and we have had, an advantage over Opposition members because we have been continually watching the position.

Mr. Clark: That's not the only advantage we have.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: Of course not. The Government wants to decide, and will decide, this issue on the basis of what is acceptable to all involved: that is, employees, employers and, of course, members of the general public. As has been pointed out by the member for Florey and by the Premier, this can be achieved only by full and frank discussions with all the parties involved, and this is what the Government intends to do. We are not going to be stampeded into making any hasty decisions that would be unacceptable to the people. Unlike members opposite, the Government believes that it has a duty to act responsibly on this important issue. It might be of benefit to members if I quoted from certain press articles and gave the results of certain Gallup polls, particularly one taken at the height of the great 1970 punch-up on shopping hours. Participating in the poll, 1,800 people were handed cards listing five proposals for weekend shopping. A report on the results of the Australia-wide poll states:

Open Saturday morning, but do not open Friday night, 30 per cent. Close Saturday but open Friday evening instead, 29 per cent. Open shops both Friday evening and Saturday morning, 17 per cent. Open shops all Saturday for six-day shopping week, 11 per cent. Close Saturday and have a five-day shopping week, 10 per cent. No opinion, 3 per cent. These figures show that only small minorities of one in 10 favour the extremes of opening shops all Saturday or closing them on both Saturday morning and Friday evening. Shopping on both Saturday morning and Friday evening has only minority support. Second preferences of those three minorities are fairly evenly divided between opening Saturday morning or Friday evening. Adding those second preferences to the first preferences shown above, it will be seen that Australia-wide opinion is fairly evenly divided between Friday evening or Saturday morning for the weekend shopping, but it must be one or the other.

Regarding proposals in the Eastern States, today's *Australian* contains an article headed "Cabinet Cool on Late Shop Issues", which states:

The New South Wales Cabinet is believed to have backed down on the introduction of late

night shopping in Sydney and other parts of the State. The Labour and Industry Minister, Mr. Hewitt, went to Cabinet yesterday with a State-wide proposal believed to give each area the option of instituting late night shopping. If approved, shops in the Sydney city area would probably have stayed open until 9 p.m. Fridays without it affecting Saturday morning trading. Other major shopping centres in the metropolitan area were expected to choose other nights—possibly Wednesday or Thursday—so that Sydney, in effect, would have gained late night shopping on at least two nights. The Premier, Mr. Askin, said after yesterday's meeting that the question had been discussed, but, because it required an important policy decision, would be taken today to a meeting of all members of the Liberal and Country Parties. The Retail Traders Association of N.S.W. is adamant that longer shopping hours will not be introduced before Christmas, and, in view of Cabinet's decision, it appears they may win their point.

#### "Shops Debate to be Lively"

Debate is due to resume in the Victorian Parliament today on a Bill to allow shops and stores to determine their own trading hours during week days. Both Labor and the Country Party will oppose the legislation but the Government has the numbers to force the Bill through both Houses. However, the Opposition is expected to force divisions at every stage.

As the Premier has pointed out, this issue is a hornet's nest with not much political favour for the Opposition. Mr. Jim Maher, the Federal President of the Shop Assistants Federation, said that the legislation was cooked up on a beer-guzzling expedition to Munich. (I understand that Sir Henry Bolte had just returned from Munich.) The Leader of the Opposition has introduced this Bill without giving any thought to those whom it could affect. His only concern has been his own or his Party's political advantage. As he said he was expressing his personal opinion, I presume that his personal political advantage was his main object. The Leader went about this matter in his usual arrogant fashion with the result that, instead of winning friends and influencing votes or winning political support for his Party, I am afraid that he has caused further concern within his Party about his ability as the Leader of the L.C.L. in this State. It may well bring about his dismissal much sooner than he expects. Opposition members may laugh, but I notice that the Leader is not smiling too much, because he well knows that his leadership has been strongly challenged during the last few months.

This Bill is another example of one of his major mistakes. I noticed the state of the House recently when the Leader was continually plucking a colleague off the benches and saying, "Can I see you out in the corridor?"

As has been pointed out by the Premier, another mistake the Leader made was that when he was in Government in 1969 he refused to take any action. At that time, when he was Premier, the Leader, when asked to do something urgently about the trading situation within the metropolitan area, refused to do anything about it, because he was afraid of the political reaction. The Leader will stay in Opposition for some time, not necessarily as Leader; he may not even be there as a back-bencher (it will not be long before we see the results of that), but nevertheless he has stirred up a hornet's nest on this issue and has certainly brought further discredit on his Party.

Like his colleagues in New South Wales and Victoria, the Leader has deliberately ignored many important factors associated with extended shopping hours. In his usual arrogant style, he introduced this Bill without considering the thousands of people involved (traders, employees and members of the public) and without considering possible increased costs to be borne by the consumer. The Government intends to consider fully all aspects of late trading, whereas this Bill deals with only one aspect, namely, permitting shops to remain open until 9 p.m. on Friday and, as has been said, it would be open slather. The Government intends to consider thoroughly all aspects of extended trading hours from the point of view of shop assistants, shopkeepers and the general public. Indeed, the Government believes that this consideration should involve all aspects, not merely Friday evening shopping, and that there should be consultation with all who may be affected by any change. I oppose the Bill.

Mr. EVANS secured the adjournment of the debate.

### **INDUSTRIAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL (BALLOTS)**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 20. Page 2365.)

Mr. CUMBE (Torrens): Last week, I remarked on the ineffective and inept way in which the two Government speakers had contributed to this debate. All I can conclude, in all charity to the two members concerned, is that they did not read the Bill. The Minister claimed that there were penal clauses in the Bill, but there is none. He then went on to say that he had no objection to individual unions' holding secret ballots if they so desired. I point out that that is all the Bill sets out to do. This measure has already attracted much attention among members of the public, and

I think we all agree that the issue is of vital importance to the whole community. The general public's reaction to the Bill has been most gratifying; indeed, I think members of the public have become sick and tired of the situation in which there is strike after strike.

The public welcomes the positive and responsible action taken by an active Opposition, in contrast to the attitude of a supine Government, which is under severe pressure and domination by certain prominent unions, their leaders and their members. These pressures extend to the Minister of Labour and Industry, as well as to many Government back-benchers, who possibly agree with the principles of the Bill but who are not game to say so. The prime and simple objective of the Bill is to insert in the Industrial Code a new provision dealing only with those associations under State jurisdiction and to grant to them the basic democratic right to conduct a secret ballot if they wish, subject, of course, to the approval and jurisdiction of the State Industrial Court.

The Bill maintains the principle of voluntary voting, and no-one is compelled to vote. After all, I submit that this is no more than a democratic right to which individual unionists should at least be entitled when their own livelihood is affected. Most men and women in industry today just want to be able to get on with their work and to be assured of a constant job. They want to be able to take home their just wages regularly on each pay day, uninterrupted by and without losing money through time lost as a result of what I call wildcat strikes.

I say this from personal experience of talking to many people in industry today. In view of the bias and obvious spleen displayed in this debate by Government members towards my Party for daring to introduce such a Bill, let me make perfectly clear to the House that the Liberal and Country League firmly believes in and supports the principle of trade unionism, especially when it is capably and responsibly led and managed. I suggest that most Opposition members who have had anything to do with industry have many friends amongst trade union leaders and respect their views. It is in that light and context that the Bill has been introduced. We believe strongly that this legislation will give support and backing to the decent average worker. It will support the decent democratically-elected union leader who today is faced with militant breakaways which in some cases have fostered strikes against the wishes



of their union leaders and certainly against the wishes of many of the groups involved.

Furthermore, the Bill will support and assist the Government, especially the Minister of Labour and Industry, who is faced with these wildcat strikes which come before him frequently and which are unwarranted and irresponsible. At present the Minister is not exactly popular with some unions over the way in which he handles his portfolio. The Government and the Minister should welcome this Bill, which will undoubtedly further assist wives and children of workers who look for a secure future and who suffer loss of wages through unwarranted industrial strikes. Most trade union members are unhappy about the frequency of strikes recently; I do not think anyone can argue about that. I suppose that nearly everyone has regular commitments to make with regard to the purchase of their houses, motor cars, and household appliances. As most of these men have hire-purchase and other regular commitments, the frequent loss of pay through strikes engineered by small minority groups creates havoc with their financial arrangements and personal budgets. Previous speakers have referred to the strike at the Elizabeth plant of General Motors-Holden's, which is a case in point. By their action, a handful of key employees very nearly caused thousands of their fellow workers to be stood down, even though the large majority of workers had no part in the dispute concerned.

We have seen this technique employed at Chrysler Australia Limited, Uniroyal and Kelvinator Australia Limited, to cite just a few cases. The technique of the rolling strike is one to which we are becoming more and more accustomed. In relation to the Uniroyal strike, apart from the fact that many migrant workers were unaware, because of language problems, of what was going on, we saw the almost unbelievable spectacle (and this should concern responsible union leaders) of several students from Flinders University attending a factory meeting, voting at the show of hands and then melting away. The late Mr. Ben Chifley, probably one of the greatest Labor leaders of recent times—

Mr. Crimes: They all say that when people are dead.

Mr. CUMBE: I think that that was an unkind remark. I respected the late Mr. Chifley for many of the things he did. I do not think anyone would argue with me when I say that he was one of the greatest of the

Labor leaders of recent years. He often spoke about strikes and the responsibility of unions. On one occasion he said:

The strike, though a vital weapon of last resort, must be handled sparingly, intelligently, very resolutely and essentially for genuine and basic industrial ends.

Mr. Clark: No-one would disagree with that.

Mr. CUMBE: Mr. Chifley also said:

For most industrial occasions, diplomacy and compromise, the reasonable approach and honest negotiation are infinitely more productive of results than is the strike.

Mr. Clark: Of course they are.

Mr. CUMBE: That is the very point I am making. Unfortunately, as I see it today, that Chifley policy does not seem to apply in some trade union circles, and the welfare of the majority of trade unionists appears to be passed over in favour of the aspirations towards power of some of the militant minority. I know that responsible trade union leaders, of whom there are many in our community (and there are several former responsible trade union leaders amongst members opposite), would firmly agree with me when I say that the remedy in this case rests fairly and squarely with the majority of the rank and file workers themselves.

If they believe in trade unionism (and I know they do), they must exercise their democratic right, attending as many meetings of their unions as they can and taking an active part in formulating policy. It is by their absence (and this happens all too frequently) from union meetings that the militant minority is allowed to dictate policies that bring in their train hardship on the workers and their families. I have no doubt (and I know that many workers in industry share my view) that, if secret ballots were held at union meetings, there would be fewer strikes and the workers and their families would be much better off. Many union members would welcome the opportunity to express their view by secret ballot rather than have to risk the reprisal and embarrassment of being called scabs, and that is usually what happens when there is an open show of opposition. It is all very well for members opposite to laugh, but this is a fact.

Mr. Crimes: Have you seen it?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CUMBE: I repeat that a secret ballot is no more than a democratic right to which the workers should be entitled, as the matter affects their livelihood and the welfare of their wives and children. The reasonable voice of the majority of workers, which is today lost

and sometimes unwanted at militant union meetings, could be expressed fearlessly if there was a secret ballot. I believe that members opposite will agree with me when I say that these people represent the moderating influence which is often missing today and which could be brought effectively to bear on many important decisions. As members of the community, we ought to show concern for individuals in industry. After all, the little man, although he may be little, is important.

Mr. Keneally: Have you discovered him on your side of the House?

Mr. Venning: He has never been lost over here.

Mr. COUMBE: We should treat him responsibly and fairly and that is the basis upon which we should approach this legislation. I recall that the Menzies Government, acting on a request from some unions, introduced legislation to provide for the election of officers, usually at the annual general meeting, and that provision is still in use today. It caused a clean-up in some union circles that were subject to misdemeanour. I believe this was a step towards democratic election of union leaders and I know that action was and still is appreciated by most of the rank-and-file workers in this country today. This Bill is therefore not an innovation.

The principle of a secret ballot on strike action has been supported by many prominent Australian Labor Party officials, although others oppose it for their own reasons. Members of the public (and after all the public is an important consideration in this debate) support it, as was shown in the Gallup poll held in August this year and referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. As many as 73 per cent of the people interviewed said that union ballots should be secret and Mr. Barnard (Deputy Leader of the Commonwealth Opposition) said, on October 10, that he supported secret ballots, and this was reported in the *Advertiser* of October 11. The press report states:

He said later that his statement applied to those cases "where a union itself determined it ought to have a secret ballot".

Mr. Barnard did not claim to have been reported out of context, so even the Deputy Leader of the Commonwealth Opposition has supported the principle of secret ballots. I will now quote factual information on industrial disputes in this State to show what a sorry position we are in at present.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: Have you looked at New South Wales and Victoria?

Mr. COUMBE: Yes; I know the position there, but we are talking about this Bill in South Australia. We are not like the Minister, who is so fond of drawing red herrings across the track.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: You should look at New South Wales, though.

Mr. COUMBE: If the Minister is so fond of New South Wales let him go over there. We know that for some years immediately after the Second World War South Australia enjoyed a well deserved reputation as the State with the best record in Australia for industrial peace. During that time labour and management in most cases settled their differences around the conference table. This was one of the main factors in the emergence of South Australia as the fastest growing manufacturing State at that time. It led to the establishment of large industries that offered employment to many thousands of workers. In the 11 years from 1955 until the Walsh Labor Government came into office in March, 1965, there was an average of 32 strikes a year, involving an average of 16,455 workers who lost 28,000 working days. That period was one of exceptional harmony. In 1957 there were only 13 strikes, involving 2,600 workers who lost 3,700 working days.

The period 1966 to 1970 shows a different picture. There was an annual average of 82 strikes, involving 45,065 workers who lost an annual average of 62,545 working days. In 1969 alone there were 72 strikes, involving 102,800 workers who lost 128,900 working days. The workers themselves lost nearly \$23,000,000 in wages. This period coincided with the famous Clarrie O'Shea case which was heard in Victoria but the effects of which flowed into South Australia.

Last year we saw a remarkable change in the pattern of industrial disputes. It was the beginning of the period of rolling strikes of short duration which did not involve large numbers of workers at any specific time. However, there were 156 strikes, involving 57,000 workers who lost 93,100 working days. The figures I have quoted have been taken from the *South Australian Year Book* and from figures produced by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. Those figures do not make very pleasant reading. Industrial unrest in recent times has been more widespread, more serious, and more alarming than it has been for decades. The concern I referred to earlier appears to have spread to some responsible trade union leaders. Mr. Clyde Cameron, M.H.R., from South Australia, who I believe

is the A.L.P. shadow Minister on industrial matters (that is, if he has not been deposed yet, as Mr. Daly has been), criticized what he called "push button strikes" at the convention of the Industrial Relations Society held in Queensland last month. He said that push-button strikes were those brought about without prior consultation with responsible leaders in a trade union. This is the type of strike we are seeing today, and the change in pattern is disturbing.

I am aware of the conditions in Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America, and I have read many of the International Labor Office reports from numerous countries where different points of view are taken on industrial matters from those taken in Australia. Whether some of these could be applied in Australia only time will tell, but it is significant that in some of these overseas countries the secret ballot must be authorized by law before a strike can be held.

The subject of the arbitration and conciliation courts in Australia is being discussed widely at present. It is a deep and complex subject on which much research must be undertaken, and it is not a problem with an easy solution. That is because at present the court is faced not only with disputes but also with such matters as the national wage case (which seems to be an annual event), minimum wages, special trade craft awards, and over-award payments. This is the order of the day. There is a deep divergence of opinion on this subject amongst many people in our community, both employer and employee organizations.

One matter that is abundantly clear is that the fiasco of, I think, last week of the Whitlam-Cameron statement about the \$20 fine on individual members of unions was a gross misjudgment of the attitudes of the unions. What a clanger that was to drop! We have all heard the angry reactions from individual unionists and their responsible leaders, protesting at the suggestion that Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Cameron made. We do not want that sort of penalty here. In fact, this Bill provides for just the opposite. The measure is in exact contrast to what Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Cameron postulated, and I presume that they put forward Australian Labor Party industrial policy during the fluffy pre-election campaign.

Further to this confused thinking and disarray in the Australian Labor Party at present on industrial matters, let us consider the question often posed about what is termed collective bargaining. The member for Playford waxed

eloquent on this subject recently and put up a great show of righteous indignation, just as he has done this afternoon when having "two bob" each way on a matter to which I cannot refer in this debate. I sincerely believe that the honourable member meant what he was saying and, to be fair to him, I will quote his remarks. The relevant part of the report states:

If anyone seriously suggests that we should substitute collective bargaining for our system of arbitration, and that person really understands the concept of collective bargaining as a system, I suggest that he is not only ill informed and preposterous but is also positively evil.

There is no mistaking what he said there. He continued:

I say that advisedly, because this would lead to the destruction of the trade union movement as we know it, of the Australian Labor Party, and of any protection for our already too large mass of low income earners.

The member for Playford left us in no doubt about where he stood on collective bargaining, and I believe that he meant what he said. However, what did Mr. Bob Hawke say? I understand that he is President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and not long ago, in my presence, he said straight-out that he was in favour of collective bargaining. Of course, collective bargaining weakens the power of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Who is right—the member for Playford or Mr. Bob Hawke? One is a member of Parliament and the other is a Rhodes Scholar, and they cannot both be right. We hear the A.L.P. talking on industrial matters in diverse tones and with diverse thoughts. It is no wonder that the average working man is fast becoming disillusioned with the A.L.P. in this regard.

Mr. Harrison: He's disillusioned with some employers, too.

Mr. COURCEY: I am pleased that the honourable member came in on cue, because he has not been in this House long enough to know when to come in on cue. The Bill before the House is a serious matter. First, it seeks to insert a new section in the Industrial Code, providing for secret ballots. It in no way interferes with other provisions of the Code and it applies only to unions under State jurisdiction. Secondly, it provides that, when a strike is likely to take place or is taking place, the Industrial Court may order, upon application, that a secret ballot of members of an association be taken to ascertain whether a majority favours the continuation of the

strike. In other words, an expression of opinion will be given.

Thirdly, the Bill sets out that the court itself shall determine the manner of taking and conducting the ballot. Fourthly, it sets out how the application for a secret ballot may be made. Those are the main objectives of the Bill, put as succinctly as I can put them. The whole matter is voluntary and the only penalty provided is for any person who tries to disrupt the carrying out of the ballot. Surely nothing could be simpler or fairer to all concerned than that. This is not a penal clause: it is for anyone who disrupts the conduct of the ballot being taken by the court. That leads me to ask, having listened to two Government speakers and some interjections, what the Government has to fear in accepting this Bill. Why should the Government not accept it *in toto*? What will be the benefits from it?

If the Government votes against the Bill, that will imply that it has something to fear. Let us consider the advantages of the Bill. In my opinion, not only will the worker and his family receive protection, but the responsible trade union leader should welcome it. I have indicated that the people want it, as shown by the Gallup poll and by my many conversations with numerous people who are getting sick and tired of irresponsible strikes (and I again refer to the push-button type of strike) and the militancy being shown by breakaway groups, in many cases against the desires of the responsible trade union leader and in nearly every case against the wishes of the rank-and-file members of the union, who suffer as a result.

The Government should welcome this Bill with open arms and appreciate it. It is not only in the Government's interests but also in the interests of the workers and the people of South Australia generally. This is a progressive industrial measure, which, if passed, will give an avenue of protection to many workers in this State, on a purely voluntary basis. They will not have to take advantage of it if they do not want it. It is available to them. I am proud to be associated with the Bill, which I wholeheartedly support.

Mr. CRIMES (Spence): I have been trying to find a mild term to describe the Bill, and the mildest term I can find is that the Bill is opportunist, tongue-in-cheek and completely insincere. If by some wild stretch of imagination the Bill included a provision in respect of secret ballots for company shareholders and members of employer organizations before

making decisions affecting the community, the Government might think again about the Bill. In referring to matters that affect the welfare of the community, I think of two things immediately—an increase in prices and a decrease in the quality of products made by employers.

The opponents of unionists condemn the unions for doing exactly what they favour for the employer classes, namely, the exercise of the right to charge more for what they have to sell, without reference to any tribunal. All the workers have to sell is their labour. Why should they not be permitted to sell it on as free a basis as that enjoyed by the employers? From what has been said by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Torrens, one might well think that South Australia was on the verge of industrial collapse, but we know that this is definitely not so. Not long ago, the Chairman of the Industrial Advisory Council (Mr. H. N. Roscrow) said:

Unfortunate and misleading publicity in other States about the extent of industrial unrest in South Australia is having the effect of depressing South Australia's growth.

This is exactly what is being done by the Opposition with this measure—by over-emphasizing and exaggerating the kind of industrial disharmony that exists here. This is where the opportunism comes in, because members of the Opposition want nothing more while we are in Government than a continual expansion of industrial disputes. They would denigrate their own State for purely Party-political purposes, and that is exactly what they are doing by introducing this Bill.

#### *Members interjecting:*

Mr. CRIMES: Indeed, it is what they have been doing continually throughout this session. The Minister of Education was correct when he said at a recent safety seminar that "the apathy about industrial accidents compares strangely with the fury generated by strikes and human and production loss from industrial accidents far outstrips that from strikes". I also refer to a friend of Opposition members, Sir Henry Bolte, who said at an industrial safety conference in Canberra:

There are 400 deaths a year and always 14,000 people off because of injuries suffered at work.

Why do we not hear an uproar from Opposition members over this situation? The answer is plain and it is easy to understand why they do not do this: they do not do it because there is no Party-political mileage in it.

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. CRIMES: What complaint do we hear from Opposition members about the production lost through unemployment? They can read the newspapers just as well as Government members can; they know there is a growing unemployment problem, yet they glory in it because they consider that this is one way they can drive down wages and worsen the conditions of workers in South Australia and throughout the Commonwealth. The very fact that they are reacting as they are reacting shows that my remarks are cutting close to the bone. This has been proven in the United States of America, where unemployment has been growing and where prices have been rising at the same time. However, fortunately for that country, the President has seen fit to do something that the Liberal leaders of this country will not do, namely, to institute price and wage controls, although the latter have not been fairly applied, according to some U.S. union leaders.

It is interesting to read of an editorial on secret ballots in a periodical known as the *Catholic Weekly*. I suggest that the *Catholic Weekly* is not the organ of a militant minority. A report in the *Australian* states:

Legislation which forces secret ballots on trade unions during disputes could lead to an increase in industrial strife . . . . An editorial in the newspaper suggested that the effect of New South Wales legislation on secret ballots could be lost "in a welter of confusion".

That is exactly what could happen here if this Bill were passed but, thank heaven, it will not be passed. The editorial in the *Catholic Weekly* states:

Rather than curbing strikes, it could be used by agitators and troublemakers as an excuse for stirring up even more industrial trouble. That is probably the reason why the Opposition is trying to have a Bill of this nature passed—to stir up more industrial trouble. That is the Opposition's clear intention. I will quote further from the *Catholic Weekly*.

Mr. Gunn: Get on with the Bill.

Mr. CRIMES: This matter has direct relevance to the Bill, because it refers to secret ballots. The editorial continues:

Oversea experience in compulsory secret ballots before strikes has not been good.

The *Catholic Weekly* suggests that the State Government should turn its attention to streamlining industrial and arbitration machinery. That is exactly what this Government is doing now. Members of the Opposition know that a Bill will be introduced to facilitate dealing with industrial disputes. The editorial continues:

Rather than press on with the secret ballot legislation it should devise means to deal swiftly with industrial issues as they arose.

This is one of the prime purposes of the industrial arbitration Bill that will be introduced soon. Regarding the New South Wales legislation, to which we must pay attention because this Bill largely parallels it, the New South Wales Secretary of the Metal Trades Federation of Unions said:

The New South Wales Government would open the way for a long period of industrial turbulence if it went ahead with the legislation. To take a secret ballot among the metal unions would take a month and would cost more than \$500.

Significantly, it has been reported in the New South Wales press that some employers have indicated privately that they foresee more problems arising from the legislation than would be solved by it. This Government has no intention of following the disastrous secret ballots course of the New South Wales Government. This Government emphasizes that the South Australian United Trades and Labor Council stands four square with the Australian Council of Trade Unions against the proposals in this or in any similar Bill. The British Royal Commission's Report on Unions and Employers Associations (1968), which speaks out strongly against secret ballots, states:

There is little justification in the available evidence for the view that workers are less likely to vote for strike action than are their leaders, and findings from our workshop relations survey confirm this. Experience in the United States has been that strike ballots are overwhelmingly likely to go in favour of strike action. This is also the experience of Canada, where strike ballots are compulsory in the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

One further quotation from that important report is as follows:

A law forbidding strikes before the holding of a secret ballot could not be enforced in the case of small-scale unofficial stoppages which made up the overwhelming majority of the total number of strikes.

Today we heard the member for Torrens talking about workshop-level spontaneous strikes: how on earth can a secret ballot be held when the members themselves, often without notifying the trade union leaders, decide to go on strike? Let members opposite tell us where they would operate secret ballots in those circumstances. There is something of further great moment in the report to which I have been referring, the Royal Commission having said:

We do not recommend that it should be compulsory by law, either generally or in

certain defined cases, to hold a ballot of the employees affected on the question of whether strike action should be taken. We think it preferable that the trade union leaders should bear, and be seen to bear, the responsibility of deciding when to call a strike and when to call it off. Occasions may of course arise when union leaders would themselves wish to hold such a ballot or are required to do so by their rules. The decision on such a matter should rest with the unions.

That is precisely what was said by the Deputy Leader of the Commonwealth Opposition (Mr. Lance Barnard), when he made clear the meaning of his remarks when interviewed on *Sunday Focus* at Maughan Church. Now, let me quote someone whom I think everyone who knows anything about industrial relations would recognize as an expert on industrial affairs not only in South Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. I refer to a man whom I know personally and for whom I have much admiration, even though I have no admiration for many of the things he espouses. I am talking about Mr. G. E. Pryke who, in case members do not know, is the Industrial Director of the South Australian Employers Federation. Speaking on this occasion at a seminar on "Industrial Relations of the Future" at an Adelaide Rotary Club luncheon, and referring to secret strike ballots, Mr. Pryke said:

I am not so sure that the solution of Australia's industrial situation is to be found in the Commonwealth Government's "determination" to insist on penal provisions.

I know it is claimed that there are no penal provisions in this Bill, but that is a worthy point of view that we on this side well appreciate. Mr. Pryke went on to say (and this is the crux of his argument):

And I am equally not quite sure that secret ballots are the answer.

If anyone ought to be sure about the situation from the employers' side, it is Mr. Pryke, and I defy anyone to say "Nay" to that. Mr. Pryke said that a secret ballot of, say, 5,000 people could not be taken overnight, and he asked what would happen to production and industrial relations while the result was being obtained. It would simply mean that the dispute would be continued, and it would perhaps be continued far longer than necessary, because in those circumstances a secret ballot would be required. If union leaders are strike happy, and so strike happy as to displease their members, surely the remedy is obvious: periodically, these union leaders come up for re-election by their members and, if the members of a union are so displeased by the militancy of the leader concerned, they can

run a candidate against him and ensure that they have someone in leadership who is not so strike happy.

However, by and large, I must add that few leaders can be described as being strike happy. Most of the militancy today comes from the workshop level upward, and that is why one often finds spontaneous strikes occurring and the union leadership being informed subsequently. The A.C.T.U. is affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I emphasize "free"), but if unions are forced by legislation to impose on memberships processes that have not been approved by or, indeed, are opposed by those memberships, there is no freedom where the State steps in to dictate to unions, and union members, how they should handle industrial disputes. As I have said, more and more disputes today are arising on the shop floor.

The Minister of Labour and Industry referred to the Federal Secretary of the Clerks Union (Mr. Riordan), who made the point about the shop stewards' power under a system of secret ballots. We would merely transfer the power that is allegedly in the hands of the trade union officials to the shop stewards in the offices or in the factories at work level. It annoys me when I hear so much emphasis being placed on industrial disharmony in South Australia and, indeed, in Australia, for discontent in factories is rife in most of the countries of the western world. My research reveals that it is rife in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, and that it is not merely a South Australian problem or an Australian problem. It seems that workers are becoming tired of being mere cogs in an industrial machine that can throw them aside into unemployment as the employers would throw out obsolete plant. We see that process operating in Australia today with the apparent blessing of the Commonwealth Government and, indeed, with the blessing of members opposite.

Mr. Gunn: That's a complete lot of rubbish.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CRIMES: If I am told by the member for Eyre that that is a complete lot of rubbish, I am well and truly satisfied that I am speaking much common sense. A problem that is as wide as the western world will not be affected by State-imposed secret ballots such as those prescribed by the Opposition. The problem goes deep; it will never be solved by people such as those Opposition members whose industrial theories are steeped in a master-and-servant mentality. We know that, under the present

industrial system, some conflict is inevitable. Until a better industrial system is achieved, however, the Labor Party, in both the Commonwealth and State spheres, is seeking to pass legislation to provide that any conflict that arises from time to time will be dealt with in a civilized manner so that it will cause the least possible disturbance to the public at large. Again, I emphasize the industrial policy of the Labor Party at the Commonwealth level, and I point out that the Labor Government in this State later this session will introduce a Bill dealing with industrial matters. In this debate, the member for Mitcham referred to our hatred of this proposal for secret ballots. He spoke the truth.

Mr. Millhouse: I always do.

Mr. CRIMES: I will not go as far as that, but I congratulate the honourable member on saying that Government members hate this proposal. We stand for a free trade union movement, as I have previously said. The federal policy of the Labor Party states that secret ballots can be part of a participatory democracy, but it does not say that it approves of secret ballots imposed by the State or Commonwealth Government on behalf of what could well be a minority of union members who are asking for a secret ballot at the behest of their employers. I reiterate that this is an opportunist Bill which is introduced by the Leader in a tongue-in-cheek manner and which is completely and absolutely unnecessary. Also, the Bill is vicious, unjust and, above all, with regard to industrial relations, it is inflammatory. It will not be countenanced by the Government or by the trade union movement of Australia. From what I have said, I think that it can be well understood that I oppose the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I support the Bill, which seeks to give the ordinary rank-and-file members of trade unions the democratic right, which they are at present denied, to ask for a secret ballot. No compulsion is attached to the Bill: people are not forced to do anything. One would hope that Government members do not oppose the Bill, simply because no compulsion is attached to it. The Leader has explained that no provision in the Industrial Code is overridden by the Bill; rather, it extends rights to workers by providing that they shall have the opportunity of a secret vote for any strike action taken. They would do this of their own free will. Opposition members are against compulsion.

Mr. Wells: But you want to compel the unions to use this system.

Mr. MATHWIN: In opposing the Bill, the Socialist Government is again failing to protect the workers of South Australia. In its usual manner, above all it shields the high-handed tactics of some union bosses. In his speech, the Minister said that, by introducing the Bill, the Leader and the Opposition were demonstrating their hatred for the trade union movement. Have you, Sir, ever heard such rubbish? The *Advertiser* quoted the Minister as saying that the secret ballots Bill was a political plot. Its article states:

The L.C.P. was accused in the Assembly yesterday of trying to create industrial unrest in an attempt to gain power with its introduction of secret ballots legislation.

Nothing more ridiculous has ever been said in this Chamber by a Minister. What is wrong with voluntary voting and a secret ballot? The Bill seeks to allow people voluntarily to ask for a secret ballot. This should be the right of workers if they want it. Government members, the great protectors of democratic rights, will deny this request of the rank and file to hold ballots in secret. Opposition members have never condemned unions. As I have said before, it is most important that we have trade unions, as they have done a great job in this country and throughout the world. We could not do without them. They are probably doing as well now as they have ever done before.

Amongst Opposition members are members of unions, and many people who belong to unions vote for our Party. Unfortunately, however, many of these people pay funds into the Labor Party. I hope that one day members opposite will realize that this is unjust. Some union members pay into Labor funds simply because they do not know that this is not required; some do so because they are afraid not to. Unless they write directly to the secretary of the union to stop it, union members have a political levy deducted from their pay. Many migrants do not realize that this is happening, and I do not think they are encouraged by some union members to learn about it. In some cases, in larger firms a worker would risk being victimized if he did not pay this political levy.

Mr. Wright: What about talking about the Bill?

Mr. MATHWIN: The member for Spence spoke about safety in industry yet he, like me, is a member of a Select Committee that is dealing with that matter now. Of course, not all unions have or expect to have secret ballots, although some unions allow them. The

great problem with the ordinary rank-and-file union member is to obtain a union rule book, and copies are difficult to obtain. When anyone joins an organization or a club, whether it be hockey, tiddly winks or any other sport, the first thing he is given after paying his dues, is a copy of the rules so that he may know what is going on. Some Government members have had strong connections with trade unions over many years, and I do not blame them for that. One realizes that any member of a union would like to be a union secretary, which many people regard as a fairly cushy post. Many people try to become trade union secretaries. I understand that the rules of most unions (and this has been pointed out by previous speakers) permit the holding of secret ballots. The Australian Boot Trade Employees Federation rule book (and at least one member opposite knows this) states, at page 37, that all questions of a general character shall be decided by a vote, that the vote shall be taken by a show of hands, and that any member may demand a ballot, or two-thirds of the members present may demand it. If one looks for variation, the Vehicle Builders Employees Federation of Australia rule book, at page 17, under "Voting", also provides that the vote shall be taken by a show of hands. If that is a secret ballot it beats me, because I consider that is far from being a secret ballot.

Mr. Wells: Doesn't it say that general matters shall be decided by a show of hands? A member would move to suspend standing orders if a secret ballot was wanted.

Mr. MATHWIN: I have only a limited time in which to speak, although I am willing to take any information given to me and to read it. On October 5, 1971, Mr. Cameron, the Labor Party's chief spokesman on industrial matters in the Commonwealth sphere, sounded a clear warning on push-button political strikes, the sort that can get under way without the rank-and-file members having a say or knowing what the strike is all about.

Mr. Millhouse: He is the colleague of members opposite.

Mr. MATHWIN: Yes. In the *Advertiser* of June 23 appears an article headed "Plan for Clean Ballots", which states:

The reported recommendation regarding "clean" union ballots illustrates the new radical thinking contained in the document. The proposals regarding secret ballots will undoubtedly draw opposition from a number of unions, particularly those on the left. But with the "heavyweights" of the Labor movement sponsoring it, as members of the Federal A.L.P.'s industrial relations committee which will present the report, there is reason to believe

that a majority of Federal conference delegates will support the proposal.

However, we have seen something different in this debate. Many quotes have been used in this debate, even one or two from the *Catholic Weekly* earlier today, so I am entitled to speak about what the *Advertiser* in its wisdom has to say. The editorial in the *Advertiser* of August 26 states:

No-one will venture to suggest that secret union ballots would be a cure-all for strikes. They could hardly be expected to eliminate sudden stoppages, or small-scale strikes of the rolling or guerilla type, especially in situations where militant officials are bent on promoting these.

I remind members of a strike that deeply concerned me because it took place in my district. It was the transport strike held in July this year, when one of my constituents, a prominent trade unionist who had risen from the position of bus driver to become the owner of the business, was so keen to do the right thing that he made his shop a union shop. However, he was forced to take his members out on strike, although his was the only private bus company not allowed to run in the State—all because his was a union shop. Would it not have been fairer to the people who were involved in the strike, and who lost money as a result of it, to have said to them, "We will have a ballot on this matter. Would you prefer to go on strike? All the other private bus companies are not on strike." Would that not have been the proper thing to do? Why should this company have suffered merely because it was a full union shop and because the union had called a strike? I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 11. Page 712.)

Dr. EASTICK (Light) moved:

That this Order of the Day be read and discharged.

Motion carried.

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

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 20. Page 2372.)

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): Following the Treasurer's remarks on this Bill on October 6, the General Secretary of the United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated (Mr. Grant Andrews) was quoted in the newspaper as saying:



The South Australian Government should consider pruning some of its expenditures so that more help can be given to the rural community . . . The rural sector is not looking for hand-outs in a selfish or self-oriented manner. We are virtually stuck with the responsibility of providing the backbone of the economy in this State, and we are only seeking an opportunity to remain in production on a viable economic basis.

We should remember that primary industry, with its many problems, still provides more than 50 per cent of our export earnings. The policies of the Government are having a completely detrimental effect and are strangling South Australian primary and secondary industries. With the vicious workmen's compensation legislation that provides for premiums that are the highest in the Commonwealth, with four weeks annual leave and five weeks pay, and with industrial unrest, how can industry expect to survive in South Australia? Whilst at home over the weekend, I learned that there was a delay in the delivery of new Holden motor cars in this State. At present, there is a delay of several days because new Holdens have to be brought from Victoria. I am sorry to say that the writing is on the wall for this Government, because its lack of understanding of the needs of rural industry is most apparent.

I should like to see the Government buy a farm and set about operating it on the basis of a 40-hour week and less and with provision for long service leave, four weeks annual leave with five weeks pay, overtime, and so on. I suppose that the Government would not pay land tax, council rates, or succession duty. Those three items are important to farmers. It would be interesting to see what it would cost the Government to produce a bushel of wheat, and how much it would have to get for fat lambs and wool. I believe that, if primary producers could get one-third of what it would cost this Government to farm an average property, they would be getting twice as much as they are getting now.

The Treasurer is opposing this Bill. A few weeks ago he took a lot of convincing about the need for a new assessment on unimproved rural land in South Australia. I could go on for hours talking about the shortcomings of the Government. I only hope the State can hang on long enough to survive the term of office of this Government so that once again members on this side may perform the task of straightening out the mess made by this Government, in a way similar to that in which we cleaned up when we returned to Government in 1968. I support the Bill.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I, too, support the Bill. This is another case which shows that members on this side appreciate the problems besetting rural industry. In outlining the policy of the Government on this matter, the Treasurer said the Government could not afford to make this concession to primary producers, as it was facing a deficit of \$8,000,000 in the current year. We know about this: the deficit is the result of mismanagement of the State by the Socialist Government, this mismanagement being similar to that which took place when the Labor Government was previously in office. During that period, the Walsh Government got the State into a mess. The Hall Government tried to take corrective action to bring the State back to a measure of financial stability.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: That's why we're over here now.

Mr. GUNN: After the next election we will be over there. The Treasurer said that the State could not afford this concession, and his statement can be understood when we see how the Government has spent money irresponsibly over the last few months. The Government wasted about \$70,000 on the shopping hours referendum, and now it is to have another look at the matter.

*Members interjecting:*

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

Mr. GUNN: I will link up my remarks. I was saying that the Treasurer has said that the State could not afford to give the rural industry some measure of relief from land tax. We know that the Government has not faced up to its responsibilities with regard to rural production. It blames the Commonwealth Government at every opportunity. Recently when I was in Canberra I was able to speak to the Minister for Primary Industry, who pointed out clearly that this State was not facing up to its responsibility.

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. GUNN: Members opposite always criticize members on this side on a personal basis.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is absolutely impossible to hear the member for Eyre making his contribution.

Mr. GUNN: The criticism levelled at this side, particularly by the member for Stuart and the member for Salisbury, is always of a personal nature. They never make any constructive contributions, but always resort to gutter tactics. I was listing some of the ways in which this Government could have saved

money. We had the moratorium Royal Commission, we had the Breuning report and we had the referendum. We also have about 14 press secretaries who are churning out a lot of nonsense.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must speak to the Bill; otherwise, he will be out of order.

Mr. GUNN: It is interesting to look at a recent document put out by the Premier's Department showing that the South Australian Government is prepared to exempt from land tax the large industries it is endeavouring to bring to this State. I understand the new hotel complex to be built in Victoria Square is to be exempted from land tax. So, the wealthy businessmen are exempted from paying land tax but the little people, the farmers who are fighting to earn a living, who laid the foundations of this State, who provide employment for many people whom the honourable members opposite claim to represent (but they use them only for their own benefits) have to pay the tax.

Mr. Nankivell: How much is the land tax concession on that hotel worth?

Mr. GUNN: About \$16,000 a year, over 99 years; that is a significant amount. I commend the Leader of the Opposition for bringing forward this measure, which shows that the members on this side are aware of the problems facing the primary producers of this State. This measure would bring this State into line with the other States, which abolished land tax on rural properties under responsible Liberal Governments.

Mr. Keneally: What about succession duties in other States? Would you like to discuss them?

Mr. GUNN: I should be quite happy to discuss succession duties.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member will be out of order if he does.

Mr. GUNN: When we are elected to the Treasury benches at the next election we will abolish land tax on rural properties in this State, as we have promised.

Mr. Clark: It is easy to promise anything.

Mr. GUNN: It is very interesting to hear the member for Elizabeth talking about promises. We know that members opposite promised my constituents on Eyre Peninsula some time ago that they would abolish road tax but they had no intention of doing so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GUNN: I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): I support the Bill. I had no intention of speaking to this Bill, but events in my district during the last week in relation to land values prompted me to do so. During the last 12 months several Bills pertaining to land tax and land tax assessments have been before this House, but I doubt whether some members of the Government realize the serious plight of the rural industry at present. The excellent season we are having now is keeping landowners' confidence up but I do not think anyone would expect to have similar seasons in the future. If next season is bad we will see just how the rural industry is placed. It is not so much the worry about prices for rural products because most rural products except wool are selling reasonably well. The big worry for landowners is over the costs of production. The producer sees no way of keeping production costs down, and he feels frustrated. Most people fear that if there is a drought next year there will be many problems, particularly with the slaughtering of stock, because it is not in a good season but during a drought that large numbers of stock are being sold for slaughter. This taxes the slaughtering facilities, and this is where the chaos occurs.

Most members will remember that earlier this year, when the quinquennial land tax assessments were made, by the time the assessments were posted the values were considerably lower than the assessments. Much pressure was put on the Government by members on this side as well as by the United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated and other organizations, and the Government, in its wisdom, decided to have a new quinquennial land tax assessment made based on values at June 30, 1971. I understand that the quinquennial assessment will be completed shortly, but I am afraid that in a few weeks we are going to have exactly the same position as occurred earlier in the year, in that the valuations on the assessments posted out will be more than the price being realized on land sales. Three years ago land in my district was sold for \$97 an acre and last week the same land was sold for \$33 an acre. A block of 600 acres with a lucerne crop growing realized only \$44 an acre. The owners of another property in my district refused \$96 an acre three years ago: they are now asking \$35 an acre, and they will accept \$30. I believe the Government is spending much money on the quinquennial land tax assessment, but it would be better to abolish the land tax on rural property altogether. I believe this would overcome the

present situation where land values are dropping more quickly than the quinquennial land tax assessments can be made. I appeal to the Government to take this course because I believe if it does so it will be saved much embarrassment—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. ALLEN: —in a few weeks' time when the quinquennial land tax assessment is released. I support the Bill.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): I thank members for the attention they have given to this important matter. I am distrusted that the members of the Government have been so unsympathetic towards this measure. This move has great meaning for a selected number of individuals in this community who are undergoing great stress and are faced with an economic situation that pertains to them alone.

Unless this State can align itself with the other States of Australia and give some relief in one of these relatively few areas in which a State Government is involved with primary producers, it will show a callous disregard for those people who have stood by rural production through good years and bad years. The rapid movement in wages and salaries in recent times more than ever emphasizes the need to do something for that part of the community that can in no way lower its costs or change the relationship between the prices it obtains for the goods it produces and its costs.

No-one on the Government side, in debating this issue, has been able to refute the argument that members of the rural community are undergoing much stress. That stands out: the problem for primary producers exists. To meet this, other Governments in Australia have acted. They have not taken action similar to the paltry action of this Government in, first, reducing land tax in such a way that it had to reconsider its decision within a few months of making the first change. The Government had to introduce a second Bill to enable a revaluation to be made and, as I have said before, that action only confirmed the warning that members on this side gave to the Treasurer when the first measure was introduced.

The Government is determined (and Ministers have given these figures) to take \$1,000,000 a year from the most depressed section of this economy and to disregard individuals who, in some cases, are suffering heartbreak because they are making and accumulating annual losses. Disregarding this, the Government says it will

still take \$1,000,000 from them. How can the Treasurer justify this attitude in relation to what has been done in other States, when he says we must have a situation equal on average in relation to other States to obtain a grant from the Grants Commission? We know that this is a fictitious defence of the Government's iron-clad and callous attitude to primary producers. This has been shown in past debates in this House when members opposite, by their remarks, have shown their contempt for country areas. If the member for Elizabeth doubts me, let him read the remarks made by the member for Stuart in this House last year.

Mr. Clark: I wouldn't doubt you for a minute.

Mr. HALL: The Treasurer is imposing taxation (and we are to discuss this matter this evening at a conference) in two areas other than land tax at higher rates than apply in other States, so in three areas, namely, stamp duty on conveyances, stamp duty on the purchase of motor vehicles, and city and rural land tax charges, this State stands at the highest pinnacle in Australia, yet this Government says that it will attract people to the State. What utter nonsense that is!

It is no secret that members opposite are extremely worried and distressed at lack of progress in this State at present. They put on a good front and the Treasurer has been going around the State claiming credit for what the previous Government has done and speaking of the great building activity by the Housing Trust in relation to factories. He has not told the public that most of those arrangements were made by the previous Government. The Government has spoken of building the Nylex factory and the Wilkins Servis factory. In relation to both the city and country, we will have the highest level of taxation in Australia, all within 17 months of this Government's assuming responsibility for the State, and the comparative advantages are being destroyed deliberately.

Mr. Venning: It's a Socialist Government.

Mr. HALL: I do not care what the label is; I am concerned that it is failing in its administration and changing its mind. The list of the number of times this Government has changed its mind in 17 months would be longer than any list of proposals in which it has been involved. Even this afternoon, on another issue, the Treasurer promised nine o'clock shopping.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader is getting wide of the Bill in closing the debate, and I ask him to speak to the Bill.

Mr. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge that I was carried away in making that reference. This Bill will institute justice in South Australia for primary producers, as the other States of Australia have done. If the Government is to look for uniformity, as it often does in other areas, let it not be selective in this matter and let it give to South Australians the advantages that people in other States have obtained. Why be antagonistic to this important section of the community?

I need not go through the long list of reasons why the Bill should be accepted: that was done when the Bill was introduced. All I can say is that I am sorry about the attitude that Government members have taken. They will have to equal the provisions of other States in land tax if they are to be in office for many months longer. There is no alternative: unless they wish to drive people from country rural properties, they will have to abolish land tax on such properties. That is the choice they have in making a decision on this Bill, and I only wish that they could be seen as statesmen rather than as Party political hacks. We will see whether they recognize the position of hardship in country areas and the need to relax this tax or whether they are directed by outside interests in the industrial labour movement. The vote on the second reading will show the Government's position. I recommend that members vote in favour of the second reading.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (17)—Messrs. Allen, Brookman, Carnie, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Ferguson, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Hall (teller), Mathwin, McAnaney, Millhouse, Nankivell, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, and Mr. Venning.

Noes (22)—Messrs. Broomhill and Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Clark, Corcoran, Crimes, Curren, Dunstan (teller), Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, Langley, McKee, McRae, Ryan, Simmons, Slater, Wells, and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Becker, Tonkin, and Wardle. Noes—Messrs. Burdon, King, and Virgo.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Second reading thus negatived.

## ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 2202.)

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): When this Bill was introduced in another place, the mover of it had little to say.

Mr. Ryan: Only four lines!

Mr. BECKER: The mover said:

It repeals section 118a of the Electoral Act, which will remove from that Act the compulsion to vote at House of Assembly elections.

The Bill deals with voluntary voting for House of Assembly elections. If one studies the speeches made by Government members in the debate in this Chamber one is surprised to see the viciousness they have displayed to howl down the Opposition. The Bill has been described in many ways as being a stooge of my Party, but I assure honourable members that it is not: my Party believes in the principle that no-one has the right to force anyone to vote. There is no forced voting in unions, organizations, clubs and societies, nor should there be compulsory voting for House of Assembly elections. In the United Kingdom, where there is voluntary voting, since 1935 there have been polls of about 80 per cent. If people are interested in politics or in anything else concerning them, they will vote. There was no point in members digressing from the Bill by referring to council elections. This short, simple Bill provides for voluntary voting for the House of Assembly, and this issue hurts the Government. The member for Florey said:

The Party, which is alarmed at the support for and the success of the Australian Labor Party Government, fears that the Leader's remarks will be true, namely, that there will not be a Liberal Government in this House for at least 12 years.

Great play has been made on that statement, but it has been taken out of its proper context. The member for Florey also said:

The Party is now forced into a situation in which it must find a remedy, and it sees the Bill as a remedy.

The Bill was introduced not by the Party but by a private member in another place. The Liberal and Country League, which is an organized Party, does not have to be instructed by other sections of the community, whereas the Australian Labor Party is the political wing of the trade union movement. We all know that, and there is no point in anyone's trying to deny it. The member for Spence said:

Can it be claimed that the source of this Bill is a place that has a great regard for the principles of democracy and the freedom of the individual?

Of course that can be claimed.

Mr. Crimes: But what is the truth of the matter?

Mr. BECKER: The honourable member's Party wants to abolish the other place.

Mr. Ryan: The sooner the better.

Mr. BECKER: The member for Spence continued by saying:

I suggest that, if we looked at a list of the company directorates and company connections held by members of the place from which this Bill comes, we would be able to judge correctly the motivations behind the measure.

Will the member for Spence expound, in the next issue of the *Herald*, on the company directorates and company connections that he mentioned? That has nothing to do with the introduction of this Bill. A company does not dictate to a director the way in which he will vote. Communist propaganda such as this, which is being used by Government members, has lowered the standard of debate. The member for Spence went on to say:

Compulsory voting has been accepted by the great majority of the people in the Commonwealth and in the individual States of Australia.

Seeking to implement reforms in this area, we desire to return to voluntary voting for the House of Assembly. I remind Government members that 50,181 people did not exercise their right to vote in the shopping hours referendum.

Mr. Curren: How many did vote?

Mr. BECKER: As the member for Chaffey is here only for his entitlement benefit, I should appreciate it if he did not interrupt while I was speaking. This debate has developed into a vicious exercise, so much so that one Government member, whom I shall not name, made the following sarcastic remark:

The Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House says he wants people with brains but all he gets are people with ankles.

What a disgusting thing to say! This proves that Government members, who were instructed to speak in this debate, had little to say; all they could do was make sarcastic remarks such as that. The member to whom I am referring also said:

I do not believe the Upper House should be there; I believe it should be an adjunct of the festival hall.

This Bill simply seeks to provide voluntary voting for the House of Assembly, and not one Government member has advanced a valid reason why this should not apply. Therefore, I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. HALL (Leader of the Opposition): I do not intend to speak at length in closing the debate. I merely recommend to the House that

it treat South Australian citizens as adults; that it give them the freedom of choosing to vote or not to vote, as they wish; and that it remove from the electoral system the hypocrisy that exists today. We cannot expect electors to make a mature decision if we compel them to make that decision. I remind the House that Australia is one of the few countries that compels its citizens to vote. If we adopted the overseas procedure, we would find that most people would vote, value that vote, and consider its implications. However, when people are forced to cast a vote they do not value it nearly as much as if it were cast by choice.

Mr. Keneally: You didn't introduce this when you were in Government.

Mr. HALL: It is time that members opposite realized they were in Government. They are continually leaning on someone else to try to avoid the responsibility of making decisions in their own right, and on every possible occasion they blame the Commonwealth Government, the previous State Government, or a future Government if they can. They will not take responsibility if they can blame someone else; indeed, they do not know what responsibility is. The member for Stuart is therefore silly to say that a previous Government did not introduce this provision; it is the present Government that is in power in South Australia, and surely it is time it acted as a Government and stopped acting as an Opposition.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: We'll make a decision as soon as you sit down.

Mr. HALL: I know that, but how long will the Government adhere to the decision? How long will it be before it reverses the decision, as it has reversed many other decisions? This Bill is not an imposition and does not compel: it seeks to confer a freedom. At a time when so many freedoms are being taken from people, it is our duty to seek out avenues to provide people with as many freedoms as possible, thereby adding to the democratic process. If the Bill is implemented, we will be eliciting from the public a mature and responsible decision made voluntarily by most South Australian citizens. I commend to the House this measure, which seeks to create a freedom, not to destroy one.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (17)—Messrs. Allen, Becker, Brookman, Carnie, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Hall (teller), Mathwin,

McAnaney, Millhouse, Nankivell, and Rodda, Mrs. Steele, and Mr. Venning.

Noes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill and Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Clark, Corcoran, Crimes, Curren, Dunstan (teller), Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Keneally, Langley, McKee, McRae, Ryan, Simmons, Slater, Wells, and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Ferguson, Tonkin, and Wardle. Noes—Messrs. Burdon, King, and Virgo.

Majority of 4 for the Noes.  
Second reading thus negatived.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 3.42 a.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 28, at 2 p.m.