

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Wednesday, February 27, 1974

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

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (JUDGES' SALARIES) BILL**

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

**PETITION: HILLS ROADS**

Mr. EVANS presented a petition signed by 251 persons who stated that the development of main roads connecting the Mitcham Hills area with Crafers would be detrimental to the quality of life in these areas and prayed that the House of Assembly would bring this fact to the notice of the Minister of Transport.

Petition received and read.

**PETITION: POWER BOAT LEGISLATION**

Dr. EASTICK presented a petition signed by 6 545 persons, stating that the proposed legislation requiring the compulsory registration of private power boats and auxiliary yachts in South Australia, together with the licensing of drivers, etc., would not substantially contribute to safer boating and was not in accord with the wishes of the boating public of this State. The petitioners prayed that the statutory provisions and regulations under various Acts of Parliament relating to the conduct of helmsmen and to the control of private power boats and auxiliary yachts be repealed and substituted by legislation dealing solely with the conduct of helmsmen and the control of private power boats and auxiliary yachts, incorporating updated provisions and the adoption of recommendations in the report of the Power Boat Committee printed on March 21, 1967.

Petition received and read.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: SUPERANNUATION**

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I have an apology to make to the House. Yesterday, a reply was given on notice to the member for Davenport. Unfortunately, I as the Minister concerned in this matter was absent from Cabinet on Monday, as I had a duty to fulfil in Port Lincoln, and a reply was drafted in Cabinet in relation to the cost of the Public Service superannuation scheme. Most unfortunately, the various calculations of the elements of the scheme were then added up by a Minister other than me, and it was overlooked that the final paragraph of the elements referred to the total of \$3 400 000, that total being added to the total of the rest. The figure that should have been given to the House was not \$6 800 000 but \$3 400 000, and that was discovered only this morning. I regret that this occurred, but it occurred because I was not present at the time that this was agreed in Cabinet and another Minister had to look in a hurry at the material that was provided for the Cabinet.

Dr. Eastick: Was it because your mathematics weren't good?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In this case it was not my mathematics. I think there was a rather hurried look at the figures in the right-hand column without looking at

the explanations. Looking at the material provided for Cabinet, I can quite see how the mistake occurred, and I regret that it did occur. The figure should have been \$3 400 000 and not \$6 800 000.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION**

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: A report in this morning's newspaper suggested that yesterday I said that the workmen's compensation legislation, which was passed by this House in the earlier part of the session, would be withdrawn by the Government. That is not true; the legislation will not be withdrawn, and I did not say that it would be. The Government has examined the regulations made under the legislation. Although the advice of the Crown Solicitor is in accord with my own view, as Acting Attorney-General in the Attorney-General's absence, as to the meaning of the regulations (that there could be no confusion at all, the regulations being clear), nevertheless it is clear also that so much has been said publicly and so many strange statements made in both the housing industry and the insurance industry concerning the result of the regulations that the simple way to effect clarity in the matter is to withdraw the original regulation, substituting one about which there can be absolutely no doubt whatever.

Mr. Millhouse: That doesn't hang together.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: There will be no amendment to the legislation. The regulation will be withdrawn and a new regulation substituted next week making it abundantly clear, with an excess of caution in the drafting, that the broadening of the ambit of workmen's compensation will refer to subcontractors individually employed doing personal work, not employing others, but working on a labour-only contract in place of award wages.

Mr. Millhouse: At least that's an improvement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: That is what was intended originally, and we are just making it clearer.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION: UNION DEBATE**

Mr. WRIGHT (Adelaide): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr. WRIGHT: On page 6 of this morning's *Advertiser* the following three paragraphs appear under the paragraph heading "Explanations":

Referring to the SPU, Mr. Hall said he had "much material" about the union which had been provided by people whose names he would not mention.

Mr. Wright (A.L.P., Adelaide): "I would."

Mr. Hall: "The honourable member can if he wants to, but I would not mention them because of the intimidation to which members of some unions are subjected if they criticise their leadership."

The interjection that I made is correctly reported in *Hansard* as "I will", not "I would". Because of the incorrect reporting, the inference to be drawn by persons intimately concerned with the Labor and industrial movements in South Australia is that, if I had been in the position of the member for Goyder, I would have disclosed confidential information. That is not true and, of course, I would not have done any such thing. I made the interjection "I will" thinking at the time that I might possibly have the opportunity of speaking in the debate, and if I had had such an opportunity I would have refuted the substance of the remarks made by the member for Goyder by using specific references and names, which he

did not. I consider that I have been placed in a most unfortunate situation, and I request the *Advertiser* to carry my explanation with the prominence that it deserves.

### MINISTERS

The SPEAKER: In the absence of the honourable Minister of Education, who, because he is away on Ministerial duties, will not be in the House this afternoon, any question that an honourable member may have intended to direct to that honourable Minister may be directed to the honourable Premier.

### QUESTIONS

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Dr. EASTICK: Can the Attorney-General say whether he intends to seek out and prosecute persons who have given professional or trade service to organizations such as hospitals, charitable organizations and the like? The situation has arisen in which a person, who for a long time has given professional service to a certain charitable body on a basis equal to that which would otherwise be provided by other persons in his profession, has been informed that he may not continue to act in this capacity whilst he remains a member of the board of the organization under review. The situation exists in the case of many hospital boards, councils and charitable organizations throughout the State wherein people with certain professional or trade skills, being the only people in the area able to give advice or services to these bodies, do so without themselves being involved in any final decision about what action will follow the recommendation they make. Indeed, in practically all instances of which I have knowledge they are not party to any decision to appoint professional or trades persons to provide a service for the organization. This is important, as in some areas those persons are the only ones that come within a reasonable distance of providing the service. Although my question relates to the situation regarding all organizations of this nature in South Australia, I point out that some areas of this State will appear to be at a greater disadvantage than others if the Attorney intends to cause the cessation of a practice which has been in vogue for many years and which has been acceptable to Governments of various political persuasions and, indeed, with Government officers knowing of the involvement of the individual in the service being provided.

The Hon. L. J. KING: The position is simply that it is a rule of law that a member of a board of a charitable organization may not derive profit from his membership of that board. The courts have for a long time held that it is improper for a member of such a board to enter into contracts with, and to provide a service for remuneration for, that organization. I assure the Leader that I did not invent that rule of law: it existed for many years before I was born. That law has always existed, and it should always have been observed.

Dr. Eastick: But has it been?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I learned recently of circumstances, to which I will refer later, in which it apparently has not always been observed. Indeed, I was surprised to find how widespread has been the non-observance of this salutary rule regarding charitable organizations. The situation arose, not because of any initiative on my part but because a member of the public complained to me that members of the board of a certain charitable organization had derived profit as a consequence of their membership of that board by entering into contracts for services and receiving remuneration therefor. Having investigated the

complaint, Crown Law Department officers ascertained the facts. The Statute places on the Attorney-General the obligation to pursue a matter of this kind, and court decisions show that the Attorney is obliged to ensure that the charitable funds are protected in these circumstances. Normally, it would have been my duty, as Attorney-General, to institute court proceedings for the restitution of money so received. I recognized, however, that those concerned acted in the utmost good faith and, there is not the slightest doubt, in complete ignorance of the rule of law to which I have referred. In those circumstances, therefore, I would have been extremely reluctant to institute legal proceedings, and particularly to go back over a period of years to recover the fees which were paid to those people and which they would have long since applied in various ways. Indeed, those concerned could have suffered great hardship had an attempt been made to recover the money involved. Fortunately, my advisers were able to show me that I had in certain circumstances a discretion to withhold action provided that I was satisfied that the interests of the charity had been adequately protected. In the case to which I have referred I pointed out to those concerned the existence of the rule of law, and told them that they could not properly have received the remuneration; nor could the organization involved properly have paid it. I said, too, that it was one of my functions as Attorney-General to protect the interests of the beneficiaries of charitable organizations. I therefore indicated that, provided no further payments were made and that in future no further arrangements of this kind were made (that is to say, that in future members of the board did not receive fees for anything they might have done for the organization), I did not intend to proceed in court.

Dr. Eastick: What about services already tendered?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. L. J. KING: Well, it is a question of payment. Where payment has been made already, I do not intend, having the assurances that have been given, to take proceedings to recover it in the specific case, but it is simply not within my power to say to anyone, "You may make a further payment," even in respect of services already rendered. I simply have no authority to tell people that they may disregard the law, and I do not intend to do that. So whilst I have a discretion to refrain from taking action on payments already made because they were made in good faith and because I am satisfied that the organizations have not suffered loss and that services have been rendered of a value equivalent to the money paid, I have no authority to say to people, "You may make unlawful payments in future." The question, therefore, does not arise.

In reply to the Leader, I want to say only that it is not a question of my (I have forgotten the expression he used) setting forth, as Attorney-General, on a campaign to upset people's arrangements. The rule of law is there; it is inflexible; and it has existed for many years. I have a responsibility actually imposed on me by Statute to protect the charitable funds, my discretion being extremely limited indeed. If the honourable Leader seriously adopts the attitude that members of boards should be able to do these things and receive payment for them, to achieve that would involve a change in the law. I am not at present convinced that any such change should take place. I think it would be attended by grave dangers. However, if the honourable member or any other interested person wants to submit a proposal for a change in the law, I shall be willing to examine it to find out whether it is possible to do anything that would avert the difficulty

to which the Leader has referred and at the same time properly protect beneficiaries of charitable funds, but the matter would require most careful consideration and I am not at present willing to say that I favour such a change in the law.

#### NEW VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS

Mr. PAYNE: Will the Minister of Transport say whether the Registrar of Motor Vehicles supplies details of new motor car registrations in South Australia to commercial firms on a financial basis? I have been approached by a constituent who has said that recently he purchased a new motor vehicle. At that time he was not a member of the Royal Automobile Association of South Australia and he had little contact with anyone else other than the dealer in purchasing the motor car, yet soon after he had the car at his house he received several circulars from various commercial organizations offering additional accessories and various other items for use by the owner of a new car. In addition, he received a circular from the R.A.A. My constituent was somewhat irate about what he regarded as an invasion of his privacy and he contacted the firms concerned and the R.A.A., all of whom said that they did not in any way get special information: it was just information that came to hand. My constituent then went to the office of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, where he was told that this service was given to commercial firms and others for a fee. I would appreciate it if the Minister cleared up this matter.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be happy to discuss this with the Registrar of Motor Vehicles because there is a strict policy that no information shall be disseminated for commercial purposes and I am disturbed to hear what the honourable member has said. I should be grateful if he would give me privately the name of the person concerned and, if possible, the names of the firms, and I will investigate the whole matter thoroughly.

#### SERVICE PAYMENTS

Mr. COUMBE: Can the Premier say what is the present position concerning service pay for Government daily-paid workers? I will take cognizance of his mathematical comments in this regard. Can he indicate whether the existing margins for skill are being maintained, what are the amounts agreed upon, and what is the likely cost to the Government of the new payments?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: As I have not had any official information from the Trades and Labor Council concerning the matters we have had under discussion, I cannot tell the honourable member what is the final result. The Government has undertaken to maintain for railway workers service and over-award payments comparable with the situation existing in the Commonwealth or in other railway services involved with ours. However, it is impossible to have in the same railway yard workers who are on different bases of pay, because obviously this would give rise to considerable industrial unrest, and this has been a long-standing policy of the South Australian Government. In South Australia, if we apply service and over-award payments to railway workers we also apply them to all daily and weekly-paid employees in the Government service, but it is on the basis of the railway workers' pay that the comparisons are made with the Commonwealth Government and other State Governments.

The Victorian Liberal Government and the Commonwealth Government have adopted service and over-award payments that are significantly above those operating to date in South Australia. After examination by the Government, an offer was made to the Trades and Labor Council

that service and over-award payments would be adjusted in accordance with the increases made by the Victorian Government for their railway workers. This rate of increase would be applied to South Australia so that there was comparability of service and over-award payments. Expressions of dissatisfaction in this regard were voiced because service and over-award payments already provided for a differential between tradesmen and non-tradesmen in South Australia. That was the position that had been adopted by the Trades and Labor Council on the last occasion service and over-award payments were examined. It was felt that the differential between tradesmen and non-tradesmen would be increased by the simple application of the Victorian increases and some dissatisfaction with that situation was expressed. The Government made clear to members of the Trades and Labor Council that, although we would be willing in total to match the Victorian increases, if some alteration in the comparison between tradesmen and non-tradesmen were urged by them that was something they should decide amongst themselves and put to the Government, rather than that the Government should make a decision, because it was considered that one could not have it both ways. One cannot increase the tradesman's rate in accordance with the increase in another State and then increase the non-tradesman's rate more than the appropriate increase in another State in order to maintain the limitation of differential between tradesmen and non-tradesmen, because that would mean that South Australia was involved in a greater payment in this area from the comparability that had been assured. That problem has been examined by the Trades and Labor Council. I understand that the council has come to a conclusion, although I have not had an official notification of it. I saw newspaper reports that the original Government suggestion had been accepted, but I have not had any official information on that score. The cost of applying the Victorian increases in South Australia is \$10 000 000 a year.

#### SOUTH-EAST ELECTRICITY

Mr. BURDON: Will the Minister of Works take steps through the Electricity Trust of South Australia to ensure a continuity of supply of electricity to the South-East? Early yesterday morning, I understand a break-down of electricity supplies to the South-East caused considerable inconvenience and loss of production to certain industrial concerns in the area and that it also caused a considerable loss of bread in most bakeries in Mount Gambier and other South-Eastern towns. We realize that the local powerhouse at Mount Gambier is not sufficiently large to supply power to the whole of the South-East: we depend for that power on supplies from Adelaide and also, from Port Augusta. As the loss of power at that time, or indeed at any time, is a serious matter to people in the South-East, will the Minister ask the trust to see whether this sort of occurrence can be avoided in future?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be happy to do as the honourable member has requested, although the break-down that occurred yesterday evidently resulted from a transformer being damaged by rifle fire. Although I am not to know whether that was accidental or otherwise, I do not see how, if it was deliberate, the trust or any other organization could prevent that sort of thing from happening in future. I note that a reward of \$500 has been offered by the trust for any information that may lead to detecting the person responsible for this, but I will ask the trust whether or not it would be possible to arrange for an alternative supply of electricity if something like this

happened in future. However, I think this would be extraordinarily expensive and difficult to arrange. I understand that what the honourable member is suggesting is that some means of auxiliary power be provided if this situation occurs again. I will ask the trust whether there is any possibility of this and bring down a report as soon as I can.

Mr. RODDA: Will the Minister of Works report to the House on the progress of contracts in the Lucindale area to extend the supply provided by the Electricity Trust? I believe some unfortunate hold-ups concerning one or two contractors have occurred. The time for the completion of the contracts has passed, and there have been the usual occurrences: the rolling plant has outlived its usefulness, and some difficulties have been experienced by subscribers who are anxious to obtain this power. Will the Minister examine the present situation and inform the House regarding the completion of these contracts?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: As I remember the situation, the Electricity Trust undertook to complete, by mid-1974, the extension from Naracoorte to Kingston, which is the last major work to be carried out in this area. I am not aware of any significant delays that have occurred in that programme. Although some minor hold-ups could have occurred, I understand that the programme is fairly well on time. Negotiations have also been proceeding with the private supplier at Kingston, and I think that they will be concluded soon. However, I will inquire and obtain an up-to-date and detailed report for the honourable member. Although I am not aware of any major delays, I will check for the honourable member. There seems to me at this stage to be an increasing waiting period for extra connections that have been applied for. I had intended to inquire about the reasons for this delay to ascertain whether we could alleviate this problem, not only in the district in which the honourable member is interested but also throughout the South-East. I have been told that, where some new connections have been applied for, waiting time is up to two years before work is begun. I understand that the trust is following a policy of doing the work strictly in order of application, but I will obtain a report soon for the honourable member.

#### FISHERIES REPORT

Mr. BLACKER: Can the Minister of Fisheries say whether the report on the preliminary environmental survey carried out by Mr. Shepherd, Mr. King and Miss Ramm, under the auspices of the Fisheries Department, will be released to the public and, if it will be released, when? In the *Advertiser* of September 12, 1973, a report outlined briefly the involvement of the Fisheries Department in this matter and referred to the survey being undertaken in the upper reaches of Spencer Gulf. In the January, 1974, issue of *Australian Fisheries*, reference was made to this survey, and some details were reported. Will the full report be made available to the public?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: It has already been stated that we intend to release as widely as possible details of the total considerations of environmental studies associated with this project. I thought I had already undertaken that as soon as a copy of the report was available I would give the honourable member one, and I had an idea that this had been done. However, if it has not been done, I will see what is the situation in relation to giving the honourable member a copy.

#### WAIKERIE SCHOOL

Mr. ARNOLD: In the absence of the Minister of Education, I ask the Premier whether, in view of the overcrowding at Waikerie Primary School, his colleague

can say when conversion of the infants block to an open unit will take place and also when the additional classroom is expected to be delivered. I have often discussed this problem with the Chairman of the school council and, as one class is housed in the porch of the infants block and another in the amenities room, I ask that every endeavour be made to provide two additional classrooms instead of one. Also, I believe that the conversion of the infants block should by now be well under way but unfortunately it has not been started. I should appreciate any information the Minister could give on this matter.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will obtain a report from my colleague.

#### ROAD INTERSECTION

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister of Transport investigate the possibility of constructing two offset "T" junctions at the intersection of Main Road No. 211 and the Sanderston to Walker Flat district road? I have been approached by the District Council of Sedan, and I believe approaches have been made by the District Council of Marne, in connection with that intersection, at which recently I think three men were killed in an accident, and I recall another fatal accident occurring at that intersection within the last few years. I know personally that this is one of those intersections where people travelling at high speed in the country reach the intersection before they know where they are. In view of this approach to me and of other information that has been supplied in this matter, will the Minister investigate the possibility of altering this intersection as suggested?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will ask the Highways Department to examine the matter, although I should have thought that the Highways Department District Engineer would be approached by both the Sedan and Maine District Councils in relation to this matter. I imagine that the Highways Department would have full knowledge of it, because councils normally operate that way, but I will have the matter checked.

#### UNIONS

Mr. HALL: Will the Premier instigate any sort of public inquiry into the contents of the statement I made in the House yesterday?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No. The honourable member abused the privilege that he has in this House as a member of Parliament to make certain allegations on the basis of rumour or hearsay. The way the honourable member could lest his allegations publicly would be, if he had the courage and the assurance of his belief in their truth, to make his statements outside this House, so that the people he defamed could make him justify his statements an court. I urge that course to the honourable member.

#### AYERS HOUSE

Mr. DEAN BROWN: In view of public speculation of financial mismanagement by the Government, I ask the Premier to release immediately full financial details as at February 26, 1974, concerning the leasing of Ayers House as a restaurant. Without success, members have previously asked for details of the financial arrangements for the leasing of Ayers House. New evidence now available must condemn the Government of financial mismanagement, unless it can explain its actions. The Government has lent the lessee \$20 000, in the form of an unregistered bill of sale, on \$20 000-worth of furniture. The interest rate payable by the lessee is 7.5 per cent, which

is a lower rate than the bank overdraft rate. No principal was repayable for the first 12 months. In addition, the lessee has used other Government furnishings, which do not come under any financial agreement. Some of the paintings at Ayers House are on loan from the Art Gallery of South Australia. Despite the generous facilities and interest rate granted by the Government, the rent payable for Ayers House by the lessee is equivalent to what would be payable for floor space of about 1 500 sq. ft. (139.35 m<sup>2</sup>) of North Terrace property, whereas the actual floor space of Paxton's bistro and the Henry Ayers restaurant, which comprises a formal restaurant, the former ballroom, and a basement dining-room (and this is an approximation, although it is reasonably accurate), is about 4 000 sq. ft. (371.6 m<sup>2</sup>). I have been told that the rent has never been paid by the due date, even though at this stage rent has been paid for the period ending March 31, 1974. Rent is payable, in advance, on a quarterly basis. I also understand that, as at February 22, 1974, no payment had been made by the lessee to the State Government Insurance Commission for insurance on the furnishings, although I fully appreciate that this could be accounted for by means of a cover note. This lack of payment caused considerable concern when there was a recent bomb threat at the restaurant. Apparently, two meetings were held last week at the Premier's Department to discuss the financial crisis at Ayers House, with Mr. Tucker, on finance, and Mr. Holland, on accounting, being involved. The evidence as presented suggests financial mismanagement by the Government, unless a complete and detailed explanation proves otherwise.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member is hawing. The provisions for the Ayers House lease were recommended by the management committee for Ayers House, chaired by the Auditor-General. Those provisions have been required to be met by the lessee. When, on a couple of occasions, the lessee has delayed in meeting the due date for his payments, I have immediately instituted inquiries from the Government to see that the requirements have been met. It was at my instigation and direction that Mr. Tucker investigated the total of the accounts of the restaurants to see what was the financial position of the lessee and to ensure that the payments to the Government were properly met. How the honourable member can suggest that this is financial mismanagement is beyond me. If he thinks there is mismanagement, I suggest that, as a member of the House, he make a request to the Auditor-General.

#### COUNTRY SPORTING FACILITIES

Mr. VENNING: Can the Minister of Recreation and Sport say what amount of finance is earmarked this financial year for handouts to sporting bodies, and what method is to be followed by applicants and on what basis they can apply and expect to participate in this scheme? Throughout rural areas, many sporting bodies are struggling because of the lack of patrons. As the Minister knows, the number of people in country areas is becoming depleted; those who keep the sporting bodies going are doing a magnificent job. How do these organizations go about borrowing funds, and on what basis are payments made to sporting bodies?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I am pleased that the honourable member appreciates the fact that we have had belated support in this important field this year from the Australian Government. Because of the relationship between the State and the Commonwealth Governments in this connection, what happens at Commonwealth level is important. This year the Commonwealth Government

made available throughout Australia more than \$3 500 000 for expenditure by the end of June. The money was to be made available on the basis of establishing large community recreation centres. The honourable member will recall that in this connection the Commonwealth Government had in mind areas for which a council or sporting group had made finance available or where State Government assistance was available. On the basis of those two criteria, the Commonwealth Government was willing to consider these projects, considerable sums being made available for work to be commenced this year at Whyalla, Loxton, Marion, and Campbelltown. The Commonwealth Government has been most anxious to give early consideration to applications for similar forms of undertaking for which allocations can be made next year. Currently, the State department is processing many applications that have been made, although obviously far more applications have been made for work next year than can be granted. However, the number of applications substantiates the remark of the honourable member that this is an area that has not received the attention that it should have received in the past. We are processing the current applications for consideration by the Commonwealth Government next year.

I believe that the basis on which the Commonwealth Government considers these applications is reasonable, namely, that there is some sporting or local community involvement, or an indication of support by the State Government. In those circumstances, the Commonwealth Government will help. In addition, the honourable member will be aware that we have continued to make grants through the Community Welfare Department, a considerable amount of assistance having been given to sporting organizations in small communities that cannot supply the funds for the work they want to undertake. The allocation for this year has been \$300 000. I understand that the relevant committee will shortly recommend to the Minister the areas in which assistance should be granted. In addition, the department is currently considering applications from bodies in this State on a needs basis, so that next year consideration can be given to all the applications made to my department for expenditure for the sort of project about which the honourable member speaks. I suggest that if he wishes to refer particularly to some organization or council he should contact my office as soon as possible, because we have indicated in advertisements throughout the State that we want everyone who has a project in mind or who believes there is a need for work in their area to tell us as early as possible, so that we can consider the total needs throughout the State and set the priorities for the work that most urgently needs financial assistance. This will enable us to determine where best to allocate State and Commonwealth money next year.

#### NOXIOUS WEEDS

Mr. ALLEN: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Agriculture to try to obtain uniformity of action by district councils in the eradication of noxious weeds? My attention has been drawn to an incident that occurred in a country district recently when a landholder was instructed by an Agriculture Department weeds officer to eradicate soldier thistle from a paddock comprising about 40 ha. Although the landholder mowed the paddock initially, with the following rains the thistles grew again and it was necessary for him to repeat the eradication process. Although the person concerned is not complaining about the action he had to take, being well aware of the provisions of the Weeds Act, he is complaining that a neighbouring council is not carrying out a programme to

eradicate this weed. Indeed, many of the weeds are growing in another council area only a short distance from his property.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will refer the matter to the Minister of Agriculture and bring down a reply for the honourable member.

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. MILLHOUSE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for clearing the decks for me. I would have asked my question of the Premier but, as he is not present in the Chamber, I will address it to the Minister of Community Welfare.

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am not sure why such hilarity should be emanating from the Government benches.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mitcham must ask his question.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Of course, Mr. Speaker. Does the Government intend to take back the administration of Aboriginal affairs, in view of the statement made by the Commonwealth Minister responsible for them? I am sure the Minister and all his colleagues are aware of the events of the last few days in the Commonwealth sphere and the clear difference of opinion (if I may use that very neutral term) on the part of the Prime Minister, his Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Mr. Charles Perkins, a senior officer in the department responsible for the administration of Aboriginal affairs. I understand that the Commonwealth Minister said at a press club luncheon yesterday that the Commonwealth Government had bungled Aboriginal policy.

Mr. McAnaney: What haven't they bungled?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I am concentrating only on Aboriginal policy, as some time ago in this House a debate took place on the handing over holus-bolus to the Commonwealth Government of the responsibility for the administration of Aboriginal affairs. The Minister then introduced a Bill, which some Opposition members opposed, for that purpose. The Minister said then that in his opinion it was right and proper that the Commonwealth should have sole control of this matter. Now, the Minister's Commonwealth colleague (although I suppose he is not his colleague now as the Minister has washed his hands of Aboriginal affairs) has admitted that the Commonwealth Government has bungled. In the interests of the welfare of Aborigines in South Australia, anyway, I ask the Minister this question in the hope that, even at this stage, it may be possible to take back the administration of Aboriginal affairs and do rather better than the Commonwealth Minister has admitted is being done.

The Hon. L. I. KING: I am deeply moved by the confidence that the honourable member has in me. However, it is not unprecedented confidence.

Mr. Millhouse: That was not the purpose of my question.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. L. J. KING: I understand that the honourable member considers that the welfare of Aborigines would be in good hands if it was in my hands, and I find it difficult to disagree with that point of view. However, these questions are not decided according to the capabilities of the Minister who may be responsible for them in a certain Government, nor are the policies pursued at certain times decided in this way. The South Australian Government agreed to transfer to the Commonwealth Government the responsibility for Aboriginal policy, because in this area above all other areas it is essential that a national policy should apply to Aborigines all over the country. The administration of policy on any subject matter that is entrusted to the Commonwealth Parliament is for that Parliament. It is a matter for the Australian Government

and the Australian Parliament to decide what are the appropriate policies in the area concerned. I have no doubt that the Government policy regarding Aborigines ought to be determined at the national level and administered through the agency of the national Government because, if for no reason other than that put to me by a former Commonwealth Liberal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Wentworth), the Aborigines themselves, those poor benighted people, do not realize the importance of State boundaries and tend to transcend those boundaries as they move about the country. I am as convinced now as I have ever been that the subject of Aboriginal affairs is a matter for the Commonwealth Government. The member for Mitcham said that I had wiped my hands of Aboriginal affairs. That is not true. The Community Welfare Department, for which I am responsible, has still considerable responsibilities regarding Aborigines. Indeed, it has considerable responsibilities concerning the operation of certain Aboriginal reserves and, moreover, it is responsible for tailoring and designing welfare services to meet the special needs of Aborigines. Far from wiping my hands of Aboriginal affairs, I will be departing soon for Hobart to attend a conference on Friday between Ministers of the Australian and State Governments responsible for these matters.

#### BUILDING REGULATIONS

Mr. MATHWIN: Has the Minister of Local Government a report, as a result of the investigation that he promised me on November 21, 1973, regarding alterations to the new building regulations? Subregulation (4) deals with the use of safety glass in doors, but subregulation (3) shall not apply to glass doors or glass panels that comprise part of a class 1 building or part of a flat, and that means a dwelling house or flat. I suggest that safety glass is needed in doors in these buildings, which are being used by people, and particularly children, and I ask the Minister to regard this matter as urgent (as I do) and obtain a report on alterations to the new building regulations.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will check this matter for the honourable member.

#### NORTHERN ROADS

Mr. KENEALLY: Will the Minister of Transport obtain a report on the present programming by the Highways Department of the Horrocks Pass to Highway No. 1 section of the Port Augusta to Wilmington road, and also of the Highway No. 1 to Stirling North section of the Port Augusta to Quoin road? Previously, the Minister has been kind enough to give me an approximate date on which work on these roads will commence, but I understand that, because of the increased traffic on these roads and the poor state of their repair, a new commencement date may now be considered.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will obtain up-to-date information for the honourable member.

#### NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. GUNN: Can the Minister of Environment and Conservation indicate what plans his department has to acquire sections of the present Nullarbor and Kanunda stations for a national park? I have been contacted by the owner of Nullarbor station who has expressed grave concern at the indecision that seems to be occurring in the Minister's department. This matter has been raised in the House before and I have spoken to the Minister personally, but no finality has been reached. Hardship has consequently been suffered by the persons operating

these stations. The owners cannot plan for the future and do not know whether to purchase more stock. At present the Eyre Highway traverses sections of these properties and fences have had to be cut but, at this stage, the owners do not know what is to happen. I should appreciate the Minister's obtaining full details of what his department is considering in relation to these two properties, and also information about the proposal that I understand his department is considering to acquire a large section for the railway line.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: As I reported to the House earlier, the Government intends to provide additional national park areas in that part of the State to which the honourable member has referred. However, it is necessary to make a clear study of areas in order to determine what is an efficient management boundary for any park we may dedicate in any part of this State. I know that the owner of Nullarbor station is aware of what we intend to do, and we are considering the area in which he is situated, but there is a need whenever this situation occurs to provide the people affected with information as soon as possible. We will consider this matter as quickly as possible in order to determine the boundaries of any parks in that area. I understand that suggestions from the National Parks and Wildlife Service are now being considered by the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, and I hope that a reply to the honourable member's question will be available soon. I will let him know when it is available.

#### ABORIGINAL CENTRE

Mr. WARDLE: Can the Premier say when work on the Aboriginal centre will be commenced at Wellington? The Premier will recall that in October or November last year I asked a similar question, and at that time he thought the committee inquiring into the matter would report to him within a few days. Has the Premier received that report, has a decision been made, and when is it likely that construction of the centre will commence?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I have not received the report, because the report by the Commonwealth committee is not yet to hand. I have made constant inquiries about it, and urged that it be completed and material supplied to me. I regret that I do not have it, and I have expressed my regret with some force.

#### BAROSSA PASSENGER SERVICE

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Can the Premier say whether there is any possibility of re-opening a rail passenger service to the Barossa Valley? People have approached me from time to time on this matter. The stations are fully staffed and I understand that the line is in use for freight purposes and is kept in good order. I pass on to the Minister, for report from the Government, the suggestion made to me about whether a trial run could be started on the Barossa Valley line through Nuriootpa to Angaston.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will get a report on the matter.

#### BLUE POLES

Mr. BECKER: Will the Premier say whether the painting *Blue Poles*, which the Australian Government has purchased, will be exhibited in this State? I have seen a report in this morning's press that the controversial painting *Blue Poles* will be exhibited in three States next month and, as many visitors from other States and overseas will be in Adelaide during the Festival of Arts, I ask the Premier whether the State Government has had the opportunity to approach the Commonwealth Govern-

ment to have this painting on exhibition during the festival.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Our Government has made no approach but I will see what is the position.

#### BALDNESS

Dr. TONKIN: Will the Attorney-General ask the committee, which he has announced will be established, to examine the procedures associated with scalp treatment, commonly advertised as purporting to treat baldness, about which an advertisement appeared in the *Sunday Mail* recently?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: There's no salvation!

Dr. TONKIN: There is no salvation, and that is the whole point of the exercise: there is no cure for baldness. The advertisement to which I have referred advertises what it calls "long hair" and states that the treatment will grow beautiful long hair and that men use it to increase the growth of their hair. The advertisement also states that, within six months, a person who has been using the treatment will not know his hair. It also offers guaranteed money back after only two weeks treatment, although I do not understand how one would know after two weeks whether the treatment was doing any good. The firm advertising is Tracoh, 50 Sydenham Road (Box 453), Brookvale, New South Wales, and the cost is \$9.50 a bottle, plus 50c for postage. Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence to the extent that I say I strongly advise people not to send their money to the firm.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I am sure that the committee will examine the matter.

#### CADELL DRAINAGE

Mr. ARNOLD: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Lands whether a decision has been made on an internal drainage plan for Cadell? On July 3 last year, I introduced a deputation from the Cadell Irrigation Area Growers Drainage Association to the Minister of Lands on this matter. On October 25 last, I asked a question in this House, seeking a reply on the matter, but as yet neither the deputation nor I have received a reply. Therefore, I ask the Minister whether he will obtain information on this important matter, as the future of Cadell is completely tied up with an internal drainage plan or scheme being provided for that area.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

*At 3.15 p.m., the bells having been rung:*

The SPEAKER Call on the business of the day.

#### HARBORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Marine) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Harbors Act, 1936-1973 Read a first time.

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

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

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

Leave granted

#### EXPLANATION OF BILL

The main purpose of this Bill is to overcome a difficulty that has arisen in the consolidation of the Harbors Act and its amendments consequent on section 64 and the second schedule of that Act. Section 64 deals with the vesting and manner of vesting of property in the Minister and the "withdrawal" and manner of "withdrawal" from the Minister of property vested in him. Subsection (1) of section 64 deals

with the granting or leasing to the Minister and the vesting in him of any property of the Crown. Subsection (2) provides that there shall also be vested in the Minister for the purposes of Part III of the Act:

- (a) all lands and properties of the Crown mentioned in the second schedule, including the beds and shores to high-water mark of all waters situated within the boundaries of the lands and properties mentioned in the first part of that schedule and also including the beds and shores mentioned in the second part of that schedule;
- (b) all harbor lights, etc., within any harbor in the State;
- (c) all wharves, etc., within any harbor in the State (excepting private property);
- (d) all properties by or by the operation of any provision of Part III of the Act vested in the Minister; and
- (e) all other property acquired by the Minister for the purposes of that Part.

It is to be noted that, while the lands and properties of the Crown referred to in paragraph (a) of subsection (2) have to be mentioned in the second schedule in order that the "vesting in the Minister" under the section might become effective, there is no requirement that the properties, etc., mentioned in paragraphs (b) to (e) have to be mentioned in that schedule for them to vest in the Minister.

Moreover, subsection (4) of the section confers power on the Governor (subject to the other provisions of that subsection) to withdraw any land or other property of any kind from the Minister (whether they were mentioned in the second schedule or not) and vest or re-vest the same in the Crown, and, pursuant to this power, lands and properties and portions of lands and properties have from time to time been withdrawn from the Minister.

In the result, it has become extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify by means of short descriptions expressed in a schedule to the Act what parts of the lands and properties originally mentioned in the second schedule are still vested in the Minister. Besides, whenever any land or property or portion of any land or property mentioned in the schedule is withdrawn from the Minister, the schedule becomes out of date and the difficulty would not be overcome by embarking on the tedious process of preparing a new schedule to replace the existing one whenever the Minister acquired or became divested of any property.

In any event, it would be incumbent on the Minister to establish his title before dealing with any land or property, and no purpose would be served in perpetuating the second schedule so long as the Minister's title to the lands and properties presently vested in him is preserved and the power to withdraw land and property from the Minister is unaffected.

Accordingly, clause 3 of the Bill repeals the second schedule and paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of clause 2 make the necessary consequential amendments. Paragraph (a) inserts in section 64 a new subsection (1a), which will preserve the Minister's title to the lands and properties presently vested in him. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of clause 2 remove the references in that section to the second schedule.

When the Act was being examined for consolidation it appeared that, when the references to the Minister were substituted for the references to the South Australian Harbors Board by the amending Act of 1966, no express provision was included for transferring to the Minister the title of the board in land and other property vested in it at that time. Although this might possibly be implied,

the Bill puts the matter beyond doubt by including in paragraph (d) of clause 2 a new subsection (6) which provides that the Act is to have effect as if all lands and properties held by the board immediately before the commencement of the 1966 amending Act had become vested in the Minister as from the commencement of that Act. This Bill, if passed, would also avoid the necessity of consolidating The Act and reprinting it with an out-of-date second schedule.

Mr. MATHWIN secured the adjournment of the debate

#### SEWERAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 26. Page 2194.)

Mrs. BYRNE (Tea Tree Gully): I wish to refer only to clause 18 of the Bill. On September 27, 1972, I asked a question of the Minister to try to resolve a situation that at that time was likely to cause residents of some streets in the suburb of St. Agnes, in the Tea Tree Gully District, to have to pay both sewer rates to the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the common effluent drainage fees to the Tea Tree Gully council whilst the premises were still connected to the council scheme.

Other areas could be affected similarly, and it must be obvious to all members that in the case I have mentioned these residents had to pay two lots of rates. I do not intend to explain how this situation occurred, because those details are contained in the explanation of the question and the Minister or officers of the Engineering and Water Supply Department can refresh their memories from that.

However, I have mentioned this case to show the problems that can occur regarding rates. In my opinion, a differential rate would have alleviated the unfair position in that case. Although it is unusual, I am sure that similar positions could occur. I hope that the amendments to section 73 of the principal Act, as provided for in the Bill, will alleviate the difficulties that I have mentioned. I bring this matter to the Minister's attention and I hope that, in his reply, he will be able to tell me whether the amendments will do as I have suggested.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 14 passed.

Clause 15—"Notice of building, etc., to be given to Minister."

Mr. COUMBE: This deals with the requirement that a person building a house or rebuilding an existing house must give notice to the Minister of his intention to do the work. When one wants to alter a house one applies to a section of the department concerned. The department has a master plan of every block within the metropolitan area on which existing drains are shown. There are certain areas over which one is not permitted to construct a building. The Minister wants to include in this section any other building or extension. I should have thought that the original Act contained special provisions to cover high-rise buildings. I should like the Minister to explain exactly what the new provision means. High-rise buildings have been built for many years. Not all of them have been for housing: some of them have been for shops in the city and in country areas.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): The matter should not be confined to either the building of a house or the extension to or alteration of a house. It involves not only high-rise buildings but also—

Mr. Coumbe: A two-storey shop or factory?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Or even a small housing block. A householder, having completed his house, may



decide later to build a garage separate from the house, and this would not be considered to be part of the house or an extension, as it would be a separate building. Plans for that type of building have not always been submitted to the department, and garages or other buildings have been placed over easements, subsequently leading to difficulties when maintenance to or replacement of the main has taken place. This is the reason for the new wording of the section. It covers any extension, alteration or new building on the block plan submitted. I think this is reasonable. The honourable member has said that provision may already exist in other places: that may be so, but to be absolutely sure we are placing the requirement in this Act. The main purpose of this Bill initially, apart from clearing up some doubts held by the Crown Solicitor, was to clear up ambiguities that existed, according to the person who is consolidating the Statutes.

Clause passed.

Clause 16 passed.

Clause 17—"Penalties for encroaching upon sewers"

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Apparently the word "knowingly" is being deleted from the Act. Will the Minister please explain what "reasonable diligence" means in this context?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: This could be tied in with the comments made a few moments ago. If a person constructs something over a sewer without submitting the plans to the department for approval, a penalty can be imposed on him whether he has done it knowingly or not, because he will have failed to comply with the law as it will be if this Bill is passed. In other words, knowingly or otherwise, he will have breached the Act. To be consistent, we have to alter this provision so that we will be able to prosecute if they fail to obtain the approval of the department in accordance with the requirements of the clause.

Clause passed.

Clause 18—"Determination of rates"

Mr. WARDLE: Can the Minister say what demand there is for differential rating, and give a simple example?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Possibly the best example I can give is that, because of difficulties in a certain area, the cost of construction in that area may be extremely high, and a differential must apply to that area. Extremely tough problems could occur that would add heavily to the cost, so some differential would have to be applied. I cannot offhand give the honourable member any examples of where this would apply at the moment, but I will inquire for him and let him know how and why a differential will apply, giving him some indication of where it is being applied at the moment.

Mr. WARDLE: Is this the main reason for the difference applying in some cases?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: There may be other reasons. The only reason why differential rates are mentioned here is that the Crown Solicitor has a doubt that we have the power to impose a differential rate. This is clearing up the matter. I know that differential rates apply to water, but I will check to see what applies in relation to sewerage.

Mrs. BYRNE: In the second reading debate I referred to an instance in the city of Tea Tree Gully where residents were being charged by the Corporation of the City of Tea Tree Gully for the use of a common effluent drainage scheme and also by the Engineering and Water Supply Department for sewerage. Can the Minister say whether differential rating could be applied to assist people in these circumstances?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The common effluent disposal scheme is conducted by the Tea Tree Gully council, not by the Engineering and Water Supply Department.

Mrs. Byrne: They are being charged two rates.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Are they in a sewered area?

Mrs. Byrne: Yes.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I will look into the matter, as what is happening appears to be unjust.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (19 to 23) and title passed.

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

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

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I support the third reading. I believe it is sensible and democratic to give property owners the right of appeal to the Valuer-General if they believe that they have been unfairly treated when easements have been acquired by the department for its work. I think we all realize that in the past there has not always been satisfaction about whether or not fair compensation has been paid by the department. Section 31a provides that two days notice be given before surveyors enter a property. It would be appreciated by many people if the department went to the trouble of giving that notice, as on many occasions in the past it has not done so. In fact, I have raised this matter before with the Minister. This Bill is part of the overall attempt to create a better relationship between property owners and the department. I am sure the Minister agrees with what I have said about the right of entry.

Bill read a third time and passed.

## ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (SPEED)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 20. Page 2135.)

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): The Bill includes various alterations to the Act in preparation for the changeover to the metric system, which will take place on July 1 this year. In other words, motorists will be required to govern their speed according to the metric system. Under the legislation, road markings and distance posts will also be altered to conform to the new metric practice. One starts to wonder about the wisdom of changing over to metrics, as we can see the cost to be incurred by private motorists. It will not be necessary for them immediately to convert the speedometers on their motor vehicles, although under the legislation they will have to have some idea of the speed at which they are driving so that they can conform to the law.

The Minister's explanation of the Bill was brief; he simply said that it made one major amendment to the Act. This provision will lay down an absolute speed limit in open areas (such as country areas) of 110 kilometres an hour, which is the equivalent of 68 miles an hour. Although, in the interests of road safety, we realize that measures must be taken to contain the accident rate on the roads, I wonder whether the absolute speed limit of 68 m.p.h. will have the desired effect. Until July 1; the present provision in section 48 will apply, as follows:

(2) It shall be a defence to a charge of an offence under subsection (1) of this section if the defendant satisfies the court that the speed at which the vehicle was driven was not dangerous having regard to all the relevant circumstances.

That provision will be deleted by the Bill, so that the moment a person exceeds 110 km/h he will break the law. How will this provision be policed? If the speed

limit of 110 km/h is enforced exactly, there will be no defence to a charge of exceeding that speed. In the past, people have had the urge to reach "the ton" (100 m.p.h.) If they are willing to accept "the ton" as 100 km/h, perhaps in the interests of road safety we may breathe more easily, but I am afraid that they will not accept that speed. The onus will be on the highway patrol section of the Police Department to ensure that 110 km/h is the absolute speed limit. Sophisticated equipment will be needed to help these officers enforce the new limit. I only hope that this new speed limit will not be used as a means of fund raising.

I understand that on country roads it is not uncommon for motorists to exceed considerably the limit included in this Bill. New roads and roads that have been resurfaced or rebuilt can take vehicles at far greater speeds than the speed contemplated in the legislation. On minor roads and dirt roads that are full of potholes and corrugations (such as part of the Eyre Highway) a person would be an absolute fool to attempt to drive at 110 km/h or faster. What all members fear is that the speed limit of 110 km/h on the open road will not only be the maximum speed but will also probably become the minimum speed. Various motorists, including Sunday drivers who venture out into the country, will regard 110 km/h as the speed at which to travel. Difficulties will be experienced, as people in all types of motor vehicle will be charging along the roads at this speed. Indeed, many vehicles will not be capable of travelling safely at that speed, so it will depend on the ability of drivers to handle those types of vehicle. On the other hand, the high-powered converted motor vehicles, which are so often driven by young persons, may exceed the speed limit.

Higher speed limits have been accepted in this country, and it will be difficult to convince persons living in rural areas that they will have to reduce their speed on the roads. On the one hand we must consider road safety and, on the other, the great distances that are travelled by those living in the country. It is therefore difficult to police the speed limit exactly. Although for road safety purposes the Party of which I am a member would be willing to accept this speed limit, it would prefer it to apply throughout the whole country, as there is no point in one State's having a maximum speed of 110 km/h and another State's having a different speed limit.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: This speed limit has been agreed to by all State Ministers of Transport, and any State that does not adhere to it is scabbing the recommendations of A.T.A.C.

Mr. BECKER: One would have thought that, if all the Ministers agreed to this speed limit, complementary legislation would be introduced simultaneously in all States.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It is.

Mr. BECKER: I was not under that impression.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: All States are changing to metric on July 1 and every State has agreed to the standard speed limit of 110 km/h. Any State that does not do so is scabbing.

Mr. BECKER: Then why did the Minister criticize the Victorian Government when it wanted to reduce the speed limit?

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Because it was not sticking to what was recommended by A.T.A.C.

Mr. BECKER: The Opposition believes that the maximum speed limit should apply in all States. One hopes, therefore, that Victoria will honour that agreement.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You should get on to your colleagues in Victoria, then.

The SPEAKER: Will the honourable member for Hanson take the Speaker into his confidence in this debate? A private conversation between two honourable members is not permitted.

Mr. BECKER: Certainly. Mr. Speaker. The Liberal and Country League wants the speed limit to be standard in all States. Clause 6 converts the various speed limits to their metric equivalents, some of which have been taken to the nearest round figure. The speed limit within a municipality, town or township will be 60 km/h (about 37 m.p.h.) instead of the present 35 m.p.h. That speed limit has, therefore, been increased slightly in the metric conversion. I am concerned about the metric conversion of the speed limit past schools. I contend that a speed limit of 30 km/h (or 18.7 m.p.h.) past a school is far too high. Because the equivalent of 30 km/h is near enough to 19 m.p.h., there is a danger of the speed limit past a school becoming 20 m.p.h. I pay a tribute to monitors at school crossings throughout the State who have made a tremendous contribution to road safety. The Minister, when quoting statistics previously, said that, of 11 000 000 crossings that had been made by schoolchildren, only one serious accident had occurred, the speed limit past school crossings having been 15 m.p.h. If the speed limit was increased to 20 m.p.h. I would be apprehensive regarding what would happen. In the interests of road safety and of protecting the future children of this State, the L.C.L. would prefer to see this speed limit reduced to 25 km/h (15.5 m.p.h.). Motorists today are willing to (and indeed do) slow down considerably at school crossings, either when the lights are operating or at those times during the day when they are not operating.

I do not believe any motorist would mind a reduction in the speed limit instead of an increase of 5 m.p.h., especially if it meant saving a child's life. This Government and other State Governments should be willing to return to the Australian Transport Advisory Council and say that they consider the life of a child more valuable than the time a business executive may save in travelling at the extra 5 m.p.h. Although the cost of reducing the speed limit would be nil, a child's life could not be measured in terms of cost. I appeal to all members to consider providing the utmost protection for our school crossings. I hope that when the new speed limits are introduced as from July 1 the Government's campaign to educate and warn motorists of the new speed limits, supported strongly by the media, will be continued. I also hope that the Government will step up the road safety campaign generally. Over the last three or four years there has been an average of 306 road deaths a year in South Australia, but that figure cannot be accepted as satisfactory. Considering the number of vehicles on the road, the number of road fatalities in South Australia is below the Australian average, but that is no reason for complacency: we should be doing all we can to improve road safety further.

Also, we should be looking at the causes of road accidents, speed and the drinking driver being two main causes. I hope that these metric conversions will not create confusion and that there will be a swift changeover of speed signs in the metropolitan area and in the country. Further, I hope that sufficient funds will be available to supply pamphlets to motorists to inform them of the revised speed limits. Although speed limits are being increased, I believe the wise motorist will keep to the old limits for a short period. Of course, after July 1 we must think in terms of kilometres an hour.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): I support the Bill. The member for Hanson dealt very well with its basic provisions and with the question of metric conversion. The honourable

member adequately covered the first point that I want to deal with, namely, speed limits over school crossings and in the areas designated by school signs. I agree with the member for Hanson that there will be a tendency for motorists to speed up from 15 m.p.h. (24.1 km/h) to 20 m.p.h. (32.2 km/h). I realize that motorists will have speedometers calibrated in kilometres an hour and that it will be simple for them to look at their speedometers. However, judgment comes into this matter, and I think we will see a significant speeding up past schools. If the limit can be changed (and I see no reason why it should not be changed) it should be reduced to 25 km/h (15.5 m.p.h.), which will bring the limit almost exactly into line with what it is now.

Mr. Keneally: Responsible drivers will slow down to much less than 15 m.p.h., anyway.

Dr. TONKIN: I agree. In the motoring community, however, there are many irresponsible drivers, and I am afraid that the responsible drivers will have to make a sacrifice in the interests of road safety. I believe that all responsible drivers will be willing to drive at 15 m.p.h. (24.1 km/h) past schools. It is a sacrifice (if it can be called a sacrifice) that they will make gladly.

The major feature of the Bill is the establishment of an absolute speed limit in this State. As the Minister said, for many years we have had a *prima facie* system. In South Australia, as the speedometer passes the 60 m.p.h. (96.5 km/h) mark the onus of proof is reversed. Up to that speed it is up to the police to prove that a driver was driving dangerously. However, above that speed it is up to the driver to prove that he was not driving dangerously. This system has involved serious difficulties, although I believe that the Royal Automobile Association prefers the retention of the *prima facie* system. I believe that it is inevitable that a top limit must be set. The member for Hanson referred to the need for conforming with other States in providing uniform legislation. I, too, believe that this is necessary. No doubt the establishment of an absolute speed limit will significantly contribute to road safety.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Do you agree with the principle of uniform legislation?

Dr. TONKIN: In many respects, I do. However, I do not believe in that principle in all fields—far from it, and one could refer to section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution in this regard. The arbitrary limit will no doubt contribute to road safety to some extent. The present fuel crisis has caused a reduction in the absolute speed limit to 55 m.p.h. (88.5 km/h) in America and Europe, and the setting of this limit appears so far to have had a significant effect on the road toll. I must admit that I have been surprised at this effect; it is certainly worth a try.

In setting an arbitrary figure for the absolute speed limit, many interrelated factors must be taken into account. The first such factor is the question of road characteristics. On many country roads it is unsafe for a car to travel at a speed of 110 km/h (68.5 m.p.h.). Indeed, most drivers drive at speeds that suit the road characteristics, including the surface of the road, the contour, and the general engineering characteristics. Unfortunately, some irresponsible people will try to drive at speeds greater than those appropriate to the road characteristics.

Another factor, of course, is driving ability. Many problems are associated with high-speed driving, and a certain amount of practice and specific training are necessary before a driver can drive at high speeds with safety. It takes a great deal longer to slow down from a high speed than it does to slow down from a moderate speed, and it also requires that people see much further ahead.

It is necessary that, when they catch a glimpse of a yellow warning sign, they immediately begin to slacken speed without waiting to get close to the sign to see the danger. At high speeds, by the time a driver can tell what the danger is he is often in danger himself and perhaps causing danger to others.

Every driver has been conscious of the disturbing effect that prolonged high-speed driving can have on him when he slows down on entering a restricted speed area. On such occasions many drivers pull into the first service station that they see to find out whether their speedometers are working correctly, because 35 m.p.h. (56.3 km/h) seems like 15 m.p.h. (24.1 km/h). This is a dangerous situation, too, and of course responsible drivers who have been travelling at high speeds are aware of the problem and keep a close watch on their speedometers when they again enter built-up areas.

I asked a question in this House some time ago about providing special licences for drivers of high-powered vehicles and, although the Minister did not seem especially taken with the idea at that stage, I am pleased to see that the Australian Transport Advisory Council regards the idea as not such a bad one. It has been put up from various sources and it would seem that the provision of special licences in connection with certain categories of vehicle (motor cycles as well as high-powered motor vehicles) would be a good idea. The effect of the provision covering special licences will not be influenced by this absolute limit. The licensing proposals refer to power, but the absolute speed limit refers only to speed, and therefore it will not affect the situation by imposing an absolute speed limit.

The third factor I mention is the nature of the vehicle being driven. Roadworthiness can be a most important factor. We all know that any vehicle can be unsafe at any speed, in fact, from their appearance, some motor vehicles are unsafe if one just climbs into them. These defects often arise during the course of the running of the vehicle. The tyres wear, brakes and steering linkages wear, and many other factors can build up without the owner realizing it. The handling characteristics of the car may change so gradually that the driver does not realize what is happening. Accidents can result, and some consideration should be given to the United Kingdom and New Zealand systems of issuing certificates of roadworthiness. There are, of course, pros and cons, but it should be investigated further to see whether or not it would materially affect road safety.

Mr Mathwin: It must be a good system.

Dr. TONKIN: I point out to the member for Glenelg that I am not advocating the adoption of this system or otherwise I am simply saying it merits investigation.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: And apart from all that it has nothing to do with the Bill.

Dr. TONKIN: I am disappointed in the Minister if he believes that. It is an extremely important factor in considering the imposition of absolute speed limits. If we were to impose an absolute speed limit and take into account every unroadworthy vehicle, we would impose a limit of about 20 km/h (12 m.p.h.). The design of the vehicle, assuming it is roadworthy, is also tremendously important. Some vehicles are not designed for operation even at 110 km/h except, perhaps, on the very best roads. This reflects on the driver's ability and training. Many drivers do not recognize their own limitations when driving high-powered vehicles, and the car manufacturers have a great deal to answer for in the matter of design, engine design, and engine capacity. We see constantly examples of cars designed with four-cylinder engines being

souped up with six-cylinder engines, and I understand one of the most popular small cars in a popular range is shortly to have a V8 engine.

A serious situation can occur when the power of a vehicle is increased: the brakes are slightly enlarged (the drums or discs are enlarged) but the braking does not keep pace with the increase in power. There is a continual search for increased power and bigger engines. Whether or not this is a response to public demand, I do not know; I think it must be. We are told psychological factors affect the style of driving, the manner of driving, and the aggressiveness with which some people drive. This reflects very much the personality of the driver. Many people, old and young, through driving a powerful vehicle, seek power that they do not have in society. Many a henpecked husband works out his frustrations in a powerful car on the public highway, often to the detriment, the damage, and the danger of other users of the highway.

The adolescent, who may be in some conflict with society, will work out his frustrations (and perhaps his fantasies) behind the wheel of the most powerful car he can lay his hands on. If he cannot afford to drive one of the production-line souped-up cars, he will try to soup up his own car with a kit; these are often more dangerous because the kit, while increasing power, does very little to improve the handling characteristics of the vehicle. That sort of person drives beyond his limitations; he has no idea of his capability. Some investigation must be made into the design of high-powered vehicles. It is too easy for young people to purchase these vehicles, and an investigation should be conducted into the entire situation. We are all aware, from personal experience, of the activities of just a few irresponsible drivers who, in large over-powered cars, take unnecessary risks. They endanger the lives of other people on the road and get away with it only because others on the road are wide awake and able to take the necessary avoiding action. They seem to think they are God's gift to all drivers, but they are not: they are a constant danger on the road.

These remarks apply to high-powered motor cycles, too, and some of the difficulties being experienced in country towns with gangs of bikies are because these young people are riding high-powered vehicles and are stampeding at speeds greatly above the safe speeds of their vehicles, generally working out their frustrations on the roads, taking unnecessary risks and carrying this on when they reach their destination. One may say their personality is emerging in both ways—in their pack behaviour and in their driving over-powered motor cycles. This may be so. The special licensing of drivers and the realistic restriction of horsepower in vehicles must become essential if we are to reduce further the road toll. There could be some control over the purchase of excessively high-powered vehicles, perhaps by controlling hire-purchase. There must be some way of restricting the availability of these cars to some extent.

The present tendency with our fuel situation will make it more and more necessary for us to have smaller cars and smaller power units, and obviously the electric motor will not provide the same massive acceleration potential as the internal combustion engine has. I do not believe our society can afford to have any vehicle more highly powered than is absolutely necessary to carry out its function and provide a reasonable margin of power for emergencies. The imposition of the absolute speed limit we are debating now is only one of many factors to be considered. It is meaningless when taken in isolation; it must be taken in

conjunction with all these other factors. As a working rule, we are forced to adopt an arbitrary figure. However, in some situations it will be too high; in other situations it will be too low. In this regard we must depend (especially where it is too high) on the common sense of the driver. With all these variables, of equal or greater importance, there must be some arbitrary figure. I agree with the member for Hanson that some country people will be seriously disadvantaged by this, but they are responsible citizens, with the highest proportion of responsible drivers, who will be prepared to accept this arbitrary level in the interests of curbing the irresponsible driver, that is, always supposing that a speed limit will curb him.

Mr. Keneally. How do you think people will be seriously disadvantaged?

Dr. TONKIN: One can work it out from the time taken and the long distances travelled on the relatively good roads in the outback.

Mr. Keneally: How do you work that out?

Dr. TONKIN: I recognize there is not much difference in it but, nevertheless, it is a factor that must be borne in mind. It will not stop country people from adhering to the absolute limit set in the interests of road safety. They are responsible people. At least, drivers will know where they stand and, what is more important, the police, too, will know where they stand. However, not enough use is made of speed zoning. Obviously, speed zoning will not overcome every existing anomaly, but it will help to provide a more realistic approach to all road situations and conditions and that is a matter that should be looked into more deeply. At times, drivers suffer great frustration, which leads to a tendency to take unnecessary risks. We have all experienced that sense of frustration that creeps up on us when we are driving, say, down the Anzac Highway within the prescribed speed limits and we are passed by car after car going well in excess of those limits. There are many other situations where this applies, and it is a source of great frustration to some people. It is hardly conducive to their continuing to obey the speed limits. With the adoption of this new speed limit, we must continue to observe speed zoning and consider all the other factors connected with it. I do not particularly like the idea of an absolute limit. I can, however, see the need for it. For that reason, I support the Bill.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): I enter this debate as one of those country drivers referred to by my colleague who will suffer inconvenience.

Dr. Tonkin: But you are a responsible driver.

Mr. RODDA: I hope my driving record underlines my responsible driving. I admit that I generally travel on the country roads at about 75 m.p.h. (about 120 km/h), but when this new legislation comes into force I shall have to reduce my speed. I am prepared to accept that inconvenience. It has been abundantly proved that speed kills. I hope the Government will see to it that there are police units throughout the country areas to supervise this new speed limit. I found it interesting to observe when in San Francisco that on the Sunday that the new reduced speed came into effect the President announced how pleased he was to see motorists observing it.

I think this new limit will work out better. As an example of this, I refer to the Dukes Highway. For some reason or other, we have more than our fair share of fatal accidents on that road. Driving at 75 m.p.h. (120 km/h) motorists come up quickly behind slower-moving traffic. When approaching a town it is often dangerous practice to slow down to 35 m.p.h. (56 km/h) because one is liable to be run into by drivers travelling at 110 m.p.h. (177

km/h); so a driver can get himself into trouble trying to observe the present speed limits. The slow driver may be as great a menace as is the fast driver, so this Bill will put the cat among the pigeons until the driving community gets used to its provisions. The member for Bragg spoke about power, which will be redundant at a lower maximum speed. This will place the onus to take further steps not only on the Government of this State but also on the Commonwealth Government and other State Governments.

I was pleased to hear the Minister speaking of uniformity. The manufacturers must be told that they must reduce the power of the motor vehicles they make, to enable drivers to keep within the speed limit. Unless this is done, all the legislation in the world will not reduce travelling at speed or make the open highways safer. However, all in all, the measure is a step in the right direction as regards speed. Drunken drivers, of course, are dangerous. Unfortunately, there are many of them in the part of the State where I live and there is not much to control such a driver. In spite of all the difficulties that the Minister and his administrators will have in accustoming the public to this new speed limit, I believe it will have a desirable effect. I hope the community will give this legislation the consideration it warrants, in the interests of humanity.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): At the outset I say that, although I am concerned about the provision that the Minister has put before the House to impose an absolute speed limit of about 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h) on open country roads, I will fully support any responsible measure to reduce the ever-increasing road toll. I believe that restricting the speed of vehicles to 110 km/h will not achieve much, because one of the greatest problems will be to police this legislation. I drive many miles on country roads, and I am sure that one problem that cannot be solved is the stupidity and irresponsibility of many motorists. Whenever I drive to and from my district I never cease to be amazed at the foolish and irresponsible acts committed by motorists on country roads. I believe that the minimum speed should be at least 75 m.p.h. (120 km/h). I think the Minister should encourage people to buy motor vehicles with smaller engines and encourage manufacturers to build safer vehicles.

The Government, through concessions in registrations, could encourage people to buy safer vehicles with smaller engines that are not capable of travelling at high speeds. For some time I have been concerned at the trend by some manufacturers to produce so-called high-performance motor vehicles. Obviously, many people who may drive these vehicles are not properly trained or equipped to handle them, especially as their maximum speed is often more than 100 m.p.h. (160 km/h). When I spoke to the agent from whom I bought a motor vehicle and asked him what type of vehicle he had on the show-room floor at the time he said, "It is a coffin on wheels." When I examined the vehicle I agreed with him, because it contained every attachment that would enable it to travel at more than 110 m.p.h. (177 km/h), and it is not necessary for anyone to own such a vehicle.

It is difficult to tell people that they cannot own a vehicle that can travel at a high speed, but a system of registration should be used that would encourage people to drive vehicles at speeds that would save fuel and would be in the best interest of the community. Perhaps the Minister could have given more details in his second reading explanation, because the Bill is quite explicit. Conversion to metric units is a commonsense move, but, on behalf of country people, I express some concern at the maximum speed limit being restricted to 68 m.p.h. Soon, the permitted speed of commercial vehicles will be 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h), and it

seems incongruous that other motor vehicles should be restricted to a speed of 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h).

I hope that the Minister will be flexible when considering this matter, so that further consideration can be given to this legislation. I generally drive at a reasonable speed, but many people pass me driving at a speed far in excess of 70 m.p.h. (112 km/h). The speed factor is not the only problem on our roads today incompetence, gross negligence, and stupidity are also major factors. I agree with the remarks of the members for Bragg and Hanson, and I support the Bill.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I, too, generally support the Bill but suggest to the Minister that some alterations should be made to one or two clauses before they are passed. I refer particularly to clause 6 in which speed limits are defined. Paragraph (c) provides:

30 kilometres an hour on a portion of a road that is between signs bearing the word "School" at a time when children proceeding to or from a school are on that portion of the road;

Paragraph (d) of this clause provides:

30 kilometres an hour when approaching, and within 30 metres of, a pedestrian crossing at which flashing lights are for the time being in operation and at the approach to which there is erected a sign bearing the words "School Crossing Ahead" or words to that effect;

I relate these two paragraphs to paragraph (g), which provides:

10 kilometres an hour when passing a tramcar that has, in the course of a journey in the same direction as the vehicle, stopped for the purpose of allowing passengers to board or alight;

I point out to the Minister that it is just as important that children going to and from school are protected as it is to protect people boarding or alighting from trams. Children have a habit of crossing roads in front of or from behind stationary vehicles, and it is imperative that the same speed limit should apply to vehicles passing a stationary tram as that which applies to vehicles passing a school crossing or travelling through flashing lights. Perhaps it can be claimed that the tram service to Glenelg is the best in this State because it is the only tram service. In addition, that suburb has the best football team. It is hoped that Jetty Road will soon become a shopping mall and that the Government will support such a scheme in Glenelg. With that move, there will be one line used for the tram service.

Clause 9 provides that a person shall not operate a self-propelled wheelchair on a footpath at a speed exceeding 10 km/h. I know that we are in the jet age, but I have yet to see a wheelchair operating at that speed. It would need to be a big wheelchair for that to happen. Nevertheless, I suppose the provision has been made in case we ever have jet or solar power applied to wheelchairs.

Clause 10 amends section 74a and deals with the requirement that a signalling device be switched off after a turn has been completed, but I cannot find anything in the Bill about a requirement that the signalling device be switched on before a turn is made. At present a person must give an indication of his intention to turn right or left, and the distance provided for is 100ft. (30.5 m). It is difficult to try to estimate 100ft. and a driver often does not know whether the lady driving ahead of him is putting her hand out to dry nail varnish or to indicate that she is turning.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Why just the ladies?

Mr. MATHWIN: I do not use nail varnish. It is difficult for some people to assess a specific distance, and some people seem to confuse 100ft. with 100in. (2 540 mm), because they put on the signalling device immediately

before they make the turn. In any case, the provision is difficult to police. Clause 14 amends section 94a of the principal Act and provides that not more than 600 millimetres of the body is to protrude. How many portions of the body could protrude that distance from a vehicle? I have yet to see such a protrusion.

I suppose that, if a person sat in the back of a utility, and put his feet out over the side, the protrusion could be as great as provided for, but I ask what other part of the body would so protrude. The only parts of the body that I have seen protruding have been arms as far as the elbow. Someone will have to estimate that the distance is not more than 600 millimetres, and a tape measure will be needed to do that.

Clause 18 relates to the pressure in tyres. The present provision regarding 100 lb. a square inch is being deleted and the words "the maximum pressure permitted by regulation in relation to a pneumatic tyre of the relevant type or design" are being inserted. This will be a difficult requirement for the Minister and all other persons who try to understand it. When I went to Europe a few years ago, I found that countries used this type of provision and the pressure gauge was about 2ft. (.6 m) in diameter, with so many figures on it that I did not know where to start. Apart from the language difficulty that I had, it was difficult to get people to understand what pressure I wanted in the tyres of my car. The man in the street will find it extremely difficult to understand the pressure required, in terms of this provision.

I hope that the Minister considers particularly clause 6, which refers to the speed of vehicles over a school crossing, in relation to the speed past a stationary tram. The matter of providing a maximum speed of 110 km/h could be debated at length but it would be hard to reach finality on the best maximum speed to provide. For responsible drivers, the speed of a vehicle is governed by the type of road or highway. I consider that speeds of more than 110 km/h are all right for a vehicle in good repair being driven on a good straight road. I rarely travel on the open road at more than 60 m.p.h. (96.56 km/h) or 65 m.p.h. (104.6 km/h), because I consider that at that speed I have time to think about what may happen and I have a reasonable opportunity to avoid an accident. However, a person can get into difficulties at speeds higher than that. The speed should be governed by the type of highway.

The Hon D. H. McKee: What we want is attentive driving.

Mr. MATHWIN: Yes. Before the Second World War, when the Germans had their famous autobahns throughout the country, a person could travel at any speed he wished. There was no hazard if the car was in good order and the person was a good driver, because cross-overs and flyovers had been provided.

Mr. Keneally: If it wasn't for Captain Mainwaring, you would have had those autobahns already in the United Kingdom.

Mr. MATHWIN: Yes, but I and another 2 000 000 people stopped that. Now we have what we term "high-speed corridors" (we must keep to the right jargon) and cars have been built for greater speeds. As the member for Eyre has said, the maximum speed for most is about 100 m.p.h. (160.9 km/h). In fact, the maximum speed for the G.T. type is about 140 m.p.h. (225.3 km/h), so my small son has told me, and he knows all about motor cars.

We were not able to have these cars when we were young and we had to be satisfied with a bicycle. However, now young people may get the speediest vehicle obtainable, and then they become either good drivers or bad drivers who

require treatment in hospital or finish under the sod. Australia is a big country, with long distances between the capital cities. Therefore, it is imperative that the road system be upgraded. Where we have roads that can take high speeds, the maximum speed could be fixed at more than the 110 km/h suggested. On the other hand, I suppose that we are in a cleft stick, in that it is desirable for the requirements to be the same in all States. It is strange when one goes to a small country and sees sign posts stating the next town is only two miles (3.22 km), five miles (8.05 km) or 25 miles (40.24 km) away, whereas many signs in Australia speak in terms of 300 miles (482.9 km) or 500 miles (805 km) from place to place. In general, I support the Bill and hope that the Minister and his advisers will consider some of the points I have raised, particularly with regard to clause 6.

Mr. PAYNE (Mitchell): I have listened with interest to the contributions that have been made to the debate and, in the main, they have been thoughtful and constructive, with some degree of concern in the case of some of the points made. Before I develop my argument, I intend to refer briefly to some of the points which have been advanced by the Opposition and which interest me. The member for Bragg and the member for Hanson expressed what I believe to be commendable interest and concern about some metric conversions, with which the main body of the Bill is concerned. We are all well aware that most clauses in the Bill convert existing dimensions to the metric equivalent or near equivalents.

The member for Bragg and the member for Hanson were somewhat perturbed at the change from the present speed limit over school crossings, whether attended by students of the school or not, to the near equivalent that has been chosen. Instead of 15 miles an hour (24.13 km/h), the speed over a school crossing will be 30 km/h. The member for Hanson claimed that the proposed new speed was equivalent to 19 m.p.h. but subsequently referred to a speed of 20 m.p.h. (32.19 km/h); but that is not unfair licence. The figure I have used was taken from the metric chart, in the Parliamentary Library, which indicates that 30 km/h is 18.641 m.p.h. I would not quibble with that: we are talking in terms of about 19 m.p.h. If members did not show concern in matters such as this, they should not be members of Parliament. We are not arguing, but simply talking about our respective views on the matter.

The figure chosen ought to have some basis other than our arbitrary viewpoints. Although we possess qualities that allow us to display concern in these matters (and in some cases we possess certain expertise on matters that come before us), I think that few of us would claim to be experts in road safety, traffic matters, speeds, etc. I think I have gone further today in this speech than I have gone in any speech before without any Opposition member interjecting. I suggest that no Opposition member leave the Chamber, because we may draw apart as I continue to speak. The speed over school crossings will be increased slightly. I do not recall any Opposition member resorting to the standing Parliamentary technique of using percentage increases, thus making more impact.

No honourable member is an expert in traffic or road safety. Although we have certain ideas of our own we cannot claim to be experts. The Road Traffic Board has been set up to consider these matters. When I studied the Bill and became aware of the changes it made I inquired of the Minister and was told that the board had chosen the speed limit relating to school crossings.

Mr. Nankivell: Whoever made the rules relating to Elizabeth did not know what he was doing

Mr. PAYNE: The member for Mallee, who has just entered the Chamber, does not know what I said earlier. He ought to do me the courtesy of picking up what the debate has been about, then giving me a fair go. It would be to his benefit if he listened to me until I had finished.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: He might apologize for the statement he just made

Mr. PAYNE: My experience of the member for Mallee leads me to believe that he would be only too willing to apologize, as he has done on other occasions. When he has made a mistake he has been only too willing to let me know. I commend him for that. I hope he does not make too many mistakes, because his apologies might be too arduous for him. The speed has been chosen by the board, which has great knowledge of these matters. One member of the board is the Commissioner of Police, who would have more knowledge in this field than I. If I can be so humble in this matter, why cannot some of the Opposition members do likewise?

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Such as the member for Mallee?

Mr. PAYNE: Yes. This was not an arbitrary figure chosen by the Minister or the board but one to which much thought was given. The speed has been selected by people with a background of training and knowledge in this field. The member for Glenelg (whom I include among the members who have been constructive in the debate) expressed the concern that any honourable member should express in a matter of this nature. Predictably, he mentioned trams, but we all understand why he would naturally refer to them. He said that he had certain misgivings about the speed of vehicles passing stationary trams compared to that for vehicles travelling over school crossings. I do not think that the honourable member made the point that, when a person alights from a tram (and this is the situation we are talking about), he is well advised to alight facing the direction in which the tram is travelling. Therefore, the traffic that the legislation is designed to control will be approaching from behind that person.

Mr. Mathwin: That's what I said.

Mr. PAYNE: I do not wish to argue with the honourable member. Even children are taught to look both ways when going across a school crossing, although I do not suggest that they are always perfect. The point I make is that it is difficult to alight from a tram, looking in the direction in which the tram is travelling, while at the same time looking over one's shoulder. The selection of a slower speed limit in this case therefore has some basis. As I have said, I am not an expert in these matters, but I suggest that the honourable member should consider what I have said, as it may explain the choice of this limit.

As honourable members have said, the Minister gave only a short second reading explanation of the Bill. However, my examination of the Bill confirms that it does fairly well what he said it did. He said that the Bill consisted of several alterations to conform to metric requirements and of one major alteration in relation to the speed limit on open roads. The member for Eyre expressed his concern about this speed limit, although we are not sure whether it was his concern that he was expressing. I think that he said that he wanted to express concern on behalf of people in country areas. I do not object to that, as he is entitled to express concern on behalf of anyone; some of the people on whose behalf he expresses concern may well need it. He said that a mandatory speed limit would be a hardship in country areas. No member would argue with the point he made that country driving was

distinctly different from driving in the metropolitan area. Although that is what the honourable member was trying to say, he took a lot longer than that and did not quite say it. The distances are longer, no-one would argue with that. I understand that country people who have to travel long distances may find that an absolute speed limit affects their activities because it takes longer for them to travel the distances involved.

I think that the member for Eyre also said that he was worried about high-speed vehicles and their capabilities; he spoke about souped-up and hotbed-up vehicles capable of doing a greater speed than 110 m.p.h. (176.9 km/h). Surely the same conditions apply in this respect with regard to country people as apply with regard to vehicles: if it is dangerous to travel at 110 m.p.h. or at high speeds, it is dangerous whether a person is in country areas or in a high-speed vehicle.

Mr. Nankivell: Are you meaning to refer to miles an hour?

Mr. PAYNE: Yes, and now that the honourable member is listening with rapt attention I shall be pleased to bring up other points shortly. I think that the member for Eyre was sincere in his remarks, but he was a little bit hoist by the fact that, because of the long distances involved in the district he represents, he must at least seem to have some sympathy with those that claim they should be able to travel at higher speeds. Effectively, that sums up his contribution to the debate.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: In other words, it was a poor contribution; that's what you're saying.

Mr. PAYNE: I would not go as far as to say that I have managed to speak for some minutes without getting into an argument, and I will try to maintain my batting average, although perhaps I have saved the rough stuff until the end. During my examination of the Bill, I noticed that clause 24 contained a conversion to metrics that was not an exact conversion. This clause strikes out "300yds." and inserts "200 metres". The distance of 300yds was previously the distance at which drivers approaching one another at night were required to dip their headlights. This is not an exact conversion. All members, including the member for Eyre, who points out repeatedly that he spends many hours driving in the country, would agree that glaring headlights were one of the hazards of night driving. A person who, through inattentiveness or irresponsibility, fails to dip his headlights creates a hazard for other drivers. I thought there could be the possibility of an error in converting 300yds. to 200 metres. However, on making inquiries, I found that the basis for this alteration was an Australian Transport Advisory Council recommendation. As other members have said, Australian motorists these days often travel to other States. On their behalf, A.T.A.C. is attempting the tremendous job of getting the traffic laws of the various States standardized. There has been acceptance of the figure of 200 metres, and that is why it has been included in this Bill. I find this acceptable. As night driving can involve the travelling of long distances, *ipso facto* those people are likely to travel into other States. Therefore, standardization of this law is a good idea.

Mr. Gunn: There are fewer people on the roads at night.

Mr. PAYNE: I agree. Clause 18 of the Bill refers to section 109 of the principal Act, which provides:

A person shall not drive a vehicle on a road if any wheel of that vehicle is fitted with a pneumatic tyre inflated to a pressure exceeding one hundred pounds per square inch

By clause 18, the reference to "one hundred pounds per square inch" is struck out of section 109 and the words "the maximum pressure permitted by regulation in relation to a pneumatic tyre of the relevant type or design" are included. I would not like to put 100 pounds to the square inch (689 kPa) into my tyres at present, although they are in quite good order. However, previously the legislation would have permitted this. The member for Eyre referred earlier to incompetent people who hotted up vehicles, and so on. Other people experiment unsafely with tyre pressures in order to get higher speeds from their vehicles. By regulation, the new provision will enable a maximum pressure to be stipulated for the guidance of motorists. At present, it is often awkward to find out the correct tyre pressure for certain vehicles. I refer to Chevrolets, a make of vehicle that I inherit from the member from Rocky River when he has worn one out; that is when I can afford to buy such a car. Getting the correct pressure, with Australian tyres, different ply, and so on, can be difficult. This amendment will cope far more successfully with today's conditions.

I remind honourable members that we all have in our districts responsible people who have special interests and who help us in our job of taking care of the welfare of the people of this State, as is referred to in the prayer that is read in the House each day. One such person in my district is Mr. Gordon Howie, a name that would be known to most honourable members. This gentleman, who is wont to write to me not infrequently, sends me much information concerning his viewpoint on various organizations in this State. On occasions he draws my attention to what he regards as inconsistencies in local government regulations and by-laws. I am not suggesting other than that Mr. Howie has considerable expertise in this area, as none of us has been able to park 311 times in various prohibited places around the metropolitan area without paying anything. Mr. Howie has written to me regarding three points in the Bill, which points I have examined. In introducing those points in his letter, Mr. Howie says:

As there is now a Bill before the House to give the Road Traffic Act some 40-odd further pushes or pokes, I will refer to a couple of items. In section 6 of the Bill I note that the term "kilometres an hour" is being used instead of "kilometres per hour". "Kilometres an hour" is short for "kilometres in an hour", which means so many kilometres travelled in an hour, which is an average speed for an hour.

He makes the point that we are using unwisely the term "kilometres an hour". Having inquired since receiving his letter, I find that in the British Isles the Statutes use the term "per hour". I have checked our own Act and have found that, until now, we have used the term "miles an hour". I have also ascertained that, in 1972, section 69 of the Act was amended to read "per hour", but that has subsequently been corrected. I have been advised that the word "per" means "through", so one could justifiably argue that "per hour" is just as bad a term.

Mi. Coumbe: It is a matter of interpretation.

Mr. PAYNE: Exactly. After inquiring, I have ascertained that there have been no test cases regarding this phraseology. I think, therefore, that the legislation can be permitted to continue using the present phraseology. Mr. Howie also made another point worthy of mention concerning the distance within which vehicles should not encroach on intersections or junctions. The latter is qualified by the fact that it depends on the side of the road on which a vehicle is parked. Mr. Howie said he was pleased to see that the distance that one could park away from an intersection was being increased. Until

now, one has not been able to park within 15ft. (4.5 m) of a junction or intersection; the amendment will alter that distance to six metres. Therefore, much more of the road space near intersections or junctions will be free of parked vehicles, and the visibility of drivers entering those junctions or intersections will be distinctly improved. Mr. Howie expresses satisfaction that there is an improvement in this area. He also suggests that the words "near the edge of the carriageway" should be deleted. However, he has not explained (or, if he has, I was not able to detect it) why he thought those words should be omitted. However, as this does not seem to be terribly important I do not intend to take any more time on it. With those remarks, I support the Bill.

Mr DEAN BROWN (Davenport): I hope to keep my remarks somewhat more brief than those of the member who has just resumed his seat. I will not give a slow-speed critique of all the other speeches made today. I will, however, refer to one point: the issue of safety at school crossings. The present speed limit is 15 m.p.h., and the conversion will mean that the new speed limit will represent a 30 per cent increase. Here I am using a percentage, which was mentioned by the member for Mitchell. Although the honourable member said the Opposition had picked a speed at random, that is not so. Indeed, it was carefully selected on the facts stated in the 1972-73 annual report of the Road Safety Council of South Australia, in which it was stated that, to June 30, 1973, no accidents had occurred on school crossings at which lights were flashing. If that is so, there is much merit in our maintaining the *status quo*, and not changing it, especially not increasing it by 30 per cent. The Opposition therefore fully supports maintaining the *status quo*.

I refer now to clause 5, which is the most important provision. The Bill is designed to improve the safety of our roads. Unfortunately, Australia and West Germany have the highest per capita road toll in the world. According to the 1969-70 statistics, Australia has about 27.5 deaths for every 100 000 persons. That means that 3 500 people are killed each year in Australia, with a further 90 000 being injured each year. This is equivalent to four times the population of Whyalla being injured each year in Australia through road accidents. Further, 21 000 more people have been killed on our roads since 1939 than have been killed in wars since then. Surely this indicates that we have a major national crisis in connection with road safety. Road accidents are the biggest cause of death of people under 35 years of age.

Professor Robertson, Professor of Pathology at the Adelaide University, has said, "This is a public health problem of the first magnitude." The Senate Select Committee on Road Safety in 1968 estimated the cost of this crisis on Australia's roads. The material damage caused by road accidents is estimated at about \$150 000 000 a year; the loss of manpower as a result of people being injured is estimated at \$74 000 000 a year; and the cost of treatment in hospitals is estimated at \$7 000 000. Those figures come to a total annual cost of road accidents in Australia of \$231 000 000 a year. No country can afford that sum, which is greater than the value of our annual exports to the United Kingdom. The average cost of each accident in Australia is about \$4 000, and this averages out at \$100 for each wage-earner in Australia. So, we have a national disaster that is costing a tremendous sum, and it is time we did something about it.

This Bill provides for one measure, but it is certainly not enough. I hope that many other measures will shortly be introduced to reduce the road toll. Unfortunately, the



member for Mallee is shortly to put forward an argument against setting a speed limit of 110 km/h. The honourable member has accused me of having little in common with him on agricultural matters, but I can now accuse him of having little in common with me on the question of road safety. Statistics show that, by reducing the maximum speed allowed, it is possible to reduce the number of road accidents. The following statement was made in a report on road safety by the South Australian Government inquiry committee:

The effect of speed zoning has been the subject of a few studies, and in some instances the resulting reduction in accidents has been significant.

There are very few studies, and it is therefore difficult to provide foolproof statistics, but two interesting pieces of information have become available in the last week concerning reductions in speed limits and in the road accident rate. The first piece of information was from the State of New York in America where a maximum speed of 55 m.p.h. (88.5 km/h) was set in January, during which the number of road deaths was reduced by 25 per cent. I am not claiming that the reduction in speed was the only factor involved, because I believe there were fewer vehicles on the road, but the authorities said that there was no doubt that a reduction in speed contributed to the reduction in the road toll. The other country where evidence has recently been produced is Switzerland. Since November, the speed limit there has been 100 km/h, and the number of fatal road accidents has been reduced by 16 per cent.

I doubt whether the member for Mallee can produce statistics like those in his attempt to show that there should not be a reduction in the speed limit. We have here definite evidence to suggest that Australia should reduce its speed limit. Australia is well known as a nation of lunatics on the roads, particularly country roads. I can recall that a group of six Americans who were in South Australia for 10 weeks said that their one impression was that they were amazed at the speed at which Australians drove on country roads, particularly in view of the standard of the roads.

Mr. Nankivell: That is the question.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I hope the honourable member will support clause 5. I repeat that we have a national crisis on our hands and it is time we did something about it not only from the viewpoint of human lives but also from the viewpoint of the cost to the nation. At least we are to have a common speed limit of 110 km/h. I support the Bill.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): It is a pity that in this legislation the Government has mixed up maximum speeds and metric conversion. Such a practice is not new to this Government, which has a habit of mixing up things so that if we do not support one aspect of a Bill we cannot strike it out because, if we do, the whole Bill may be lost. I would have liked to see the question of speed limits dealt with on its own.

Mr. Becker: Is it a Socialist plot?

Mr. VENNING: No. In some respects reducing speed limits on country roads in this vast continent is a backward step; rather, we could have implemented a better form of speed zoning in such areas to good effect. In this modern age our country roads have not been developed as rapidly as they should have been developed. Despite the fact that the Highways Department has modern equipment, we still have roads where motorists have to pass within 2 ft. (0.6 m) of each other at 60 m.p.h. (96.5 km/h). Such roads should have been upgraded to reduce the dangers associated with errors in judgment or loss of concentration.

It is interesting that the Bill even goes back to the horse and buggy days, when we carted grain in trolleys and we were allowed to cart so much weight for each inch of waggon tyre. Provision is made for conversion to metric measurements in that case.

I agree with the comments of previous speakers regarding school crossings. The increasing of speed limits at school crossings is a backward step. The present situation is handled very well by the young people attending the schools. One problem at crossings that must be closely watched is that of overtaking a vehicle that has stopped at the crossing. This is easily done by drivers who are slightly inattentive, perhaps having something on their minds. The increase of the speed limit at these crossings is a bad step.

With the fuel crisis in overseas countries, we see a tendency to unload high-powered vehicles in our country. The member for Mitchell and I have something in common in that we both like driving Chevrolets. At present Chevrolets are being brought into this country, having 400 cubic centimetre engines, much too large for the requirements even of a vehicle of this size. It is, of course, very hard on fuel consumption. American manufacturers are tooling up for smaller cars, but some of the firms are endeavouring to unload the larger vehicles in Australia. Something can be done to restrict the power of G.T.R.-type cars, for example, that can travel at 110 m.p.h. (177 km/h). That is too ridiculous. When we get the road through to Western Australia, just imagine travelling at 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h) maximum speed across the Nullarbor Plain! A form of speed zoning could be developed so that the *status quo* could be retained in some areas.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What do you think the speed limit should be for the Eyre Highway?

Mr. VENNING: I suggest the present legislation is adequate in those areas. It is up to the motorist to prove that he was driving with due care, and I think that is right. The remainder of the Bill simply updates the measurements contained in the Act to metric terms. I support that aspect of it, but I am not at all pleased with the maximum speed. Some members on this side of the House represent country areas and must travel long distances. The work load of the member of Parliament is greater today than ever before. Members must travel from one point to another in a restricted period, and it is most important that members of Parliament, who make laws, should not break them. For this reason the restriction concerns me, but with those reservations I support the legislation.

Mr. KENEALLY (Stuart): I support the Bill, and I recall that on one previous occasion when I rose to compliment the responsible Minister on the work he was doing I was accused by the then member for Alexandra of making the most sycophantic speech ever heard in this House. I have been asked what that means and, while I am not quite sure, I think it is a speech of considerable praise. Members of the Opposition today have been doing the same thing in supporting the Minister who introduced the Bill. We all agree that we have, in the Minister of Transport, a Minister who has demonstrated a great regard for the safety of the people of South Australia. Anyone who is in Government and who is interested in the welfare and the safety of the people he represents will sometimes be required to make decisions that do not meet with total approval. This Bill is such a case. I do not expect that everyone in South Australia will be happy when this Parliament agrees that the speed limit in South Australia should be set at 110 km/h. We have just heard from the member for Rocky River,

and many other members have said, too, that the current speed limits should remain.

I live at Port Augusta, at the top of the triangle formed by Port Pirie, Whyalla, and Port Augusta. In that area we have one of the worst records for serious accidents in the State. Although the section of the road between Whyalla and Port Augusta is not as good as it should be (and the Government is already doing something about that by building a new road and upgrading another section of the existing road) all the accidents on that road cannot be blamed on the condition of the road. Many are caused by excessive speeds. Anyone who believes that it necessary to travel at more than about 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h) to get from one point to another in a reasonable time astounds me. Like other members, I live in the country, about 200 miles (322 km) from Adelaide, and at 110 km/h as a maximum speed I could be in the city in less than three hours. About 10 or 15 years ago that would have been regarded as an incredibly short time for the journey.

Mr. Becker: What is the record now?

Mr. KENEALLY: I am not sure; I understand some motorists have been able to travel from Adelaide to Port Augusta in about two hours, but I suspect that sort of licence will not prevail much longer, it has been said in this debate that, if the condition of the roads was better, the motorist would be able to travel more safely at greater speeds. While that point is arguable, it seems to me that, if one is travelling at high speed and finds it necessary to brake suddenly, the condition of the road makes no difference if the speed is excessive. The driver has hit the obstacle before he can do anything about it. In that situation the condition of the road would not prevent the accident. The best way to stop people from having serious accidents is to reduce the speed. As the member for Torrens would say, this is not a panacea for all traffic problems but it is at least an attempt by the Minister to eliminate one factor causing road accidents.

Many suggestions were made by the member for Bragg, the member for Davenport, and the member for Hanson. All the suggestions made by those honourable members in their various contributions will be considered by the authorities who have the responsibility in South Australia to recommend legislation that will make our roads safer. Such matters as speed, vehicles, speed zoning, etc., will all be considered.

This Bill is concerned mainly with the speed at which motorists should be able to drive. I think the House will see fit to agree that 68 m.p.h., or 110 km/h, is the maximum speed at which we should be allowed to drive. Any honourable member who would disagree or argue with this would find himself in conflict with world opinion. Throughout the world now there is a move to reduce speed limits by Governments that have a responsibility to their citizens in the matter of road safety.

Another factor causing much concern (and, I must say, rightly so) is the increased speed at which this Bill will allow motorists to travel past schools. The current speed limit is 15 m.p.h. (24.14 km/h), so 30 km/h will allow motorists to travel past schools at 18.6 m.p.h. Apart from the fact that has already been pointed out to the House, that the Road Traffic Board, which is the responsible body, agrees that 30 km/h past schools is a safe speed, another fact that should be made known to members is, as I understand it, that in future speedometers will be graded in 10's and not in 5's, as at present. So all speed limits that we see in this Bill are in 10's, which will make it easier for the motorist who needs to check his speed when

driving past a school. That may not be an argument that satisfies all members, but it is one of the reasons why the Road Traffic Board has accepted 30 km/h as a reasonable speed.

I understand (here I may be wrong and am open to correction) that no other State in Australia has an arbitrary speed limit past schools. In other States one is required to drive past a school at a speed that is reasonable in the prevailing conditions, but in South Australia we have always had a speed limit in that respect of 15 m.p.h. (24.14 km/h); and in that we have been wise. If we wanted to refer this speed limit to the Australian Transport Advisory Council and were striving for uniformity throughout Australia, we would see that even with 30 km/h South Australia has the most restrictive speed limit of all States past schools. Again, members may not consider that to be an argument that would support an increase in speeds. I can understand their reservations about this. Nevertheless, I am prepared to go along with the Road Traffic Board with a speed limit of 30 km/h past schools.

One point of view that has been expressed by most members is that, for the safety of the motorist, it is important that we have some degree of uniformity throughout Australia, so that a motorist going from one State to another does not find himself faced with a different set of rules. I understand that at a meeting of A.T.A.C. it was decided that a speed limit of 110 km/h should apply to the whole of Australia. I understand, too, that the Victorian Government has already produced legislation and that the speed limit there is 60 m.p.h., or about 98 km/h. So, immediately we have this confusion again. I suspect that in Victoria 60 m.p.h. (98 km/h) may be a little slow for the average motorist. I would be willing to accept a speed of 60 m.p.h. and I rarely travel at a speed higher than that or 65 m.p.h. It distresses me that motorists from South Australia will be faced with the same position as applies now when they travel to Victoria, and because of the different speed limits they could come into conflict with the law. It seems to me that the most sensible thing is to have uniformity. We in South Australia will accept the recommendations but, unfortunately, Victoria has not accepted them.

Worthwhile speeches have been made in the debate, as the member for Mitchell has pointed out, and I do not disagree with much that members opposite have said. They have shown a regard for the safety of people in South Australia and have shown the responsibility that one expects. However, I point out that the provisions in the Bill have been recommended by A.T.A.C. and the Road Traffic Board. In some cases they are more restrictive than what applies in other States. I support the Bill.

Mr. BLACKER. (Flinders): During the debate there has been controversy about the absolute speed limit of 110 km/h. I consider that that is a desirable limit but I can understand how at times the fact that a person is running late will cause the speed limit to be exceeded. The question of the capabilities of the road system to handle higher speeds is involved, because at this stage our road system is not built to the standards that would cope adequately with the average driver at speeds in excess of the limit.

Many comments have been made about the changes to the metric system provided for in the Bill, and I consider that some points that have not yet been raised are of the utmost importance. I refer first to the specifications set down regarding the size of vehicles built for commercial purposes. Provision is made for a change from 40 in. to 1 metre. Only a small part of 1 in. is involved, but trucks

are designed and built to exact specifications and this small part of lin. could mean that several makes of vehicle now on the road were being driven unlawfully.

The point also comes to mind about the change in overall length from 66ft. to 20 metres. This causes more concern than any other changes. Probably, the figure has been arrived at on a rounded-figure basis but most specialist vehicles, such as motor car carriers, are designed to the very specification in the law at the time of building. The provision regarding an overall length of 66ft. has applied for many years and I know several carriers who have vehicles that are built to that exact specification. If 1in. (2.5 cm) were taken from that measurement and it became 65ft. 11in. (19.5 m) the vehicle would contravene the law. This point should be drawn to the Minister's attention, so that it can be rectified or a clause introduced that would give protection to vehicles which were constructed under the existing law during the past 15 years but which have now become ineligible to travel on roads because of the change in the law. Many facts and figures have been given about school crossings, and they are probably the only issue I query concerning speed limits. Generally, metrication has been introduced in this legislation with much common sense, but I reiterate the point that vehicle manufacturers may have problems with the specifications that they have used for vehicles for many years. Basically, I support the Bill.

Mr. MAX BROWN (Whyalla): I did not think, Mr. Speaker, that you would ever ask me to speak in this debate: it seems to have been progressing for some time. First, I believe that all previous speakers have accepted the one basic issue in this Bill: that is, we have all expressed our concern about speed on the roads, not only in the city but also in country areas, and that that is a matter that must be considered. Perhaps one may get the idea that a Bill with 39 clauses is a massive piece of legislation, but this is a simple Bill; first, providing a change to the metric system and, secondly, providing speed limits. I confess that I am one of many people in the community who cannot become accustomed to the metric system. As I am not a young man, it may take me some time to become used to it, and I may become more familiar with it when the complete system is operating.

I welcome this Bill, because I believe it attacks the prime problem on our roads, and that is speed. I believe the member for Hanson made a good contribution to this debate, and he pointed out correctly that the Bill provided no legal defence for exceeding the maximum speed limit set down. This is an important step forward. It has been proved for some years that the Police Force finds it difficult to obtain a conviction when dealing with a speed offence. This issue of excessive speed has caused much distress to many families, and it is enlightening to see that the Bill introduces a major step forward regarding the policing of speed in this State. The member for Hanson said that this speed limit may lead to people charging down the road at 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h). However, I believe that they do this now, and it would be fair to say that they sometimes charge down the road at speeds in excess of 68 m.p.h.

The honourable member referred to the question of rural people having to govern themselves to the maximum speed limit, but I believe that is something that they will have to do. The member for Bragg specifically dealt with the question of school crossings. The Bill provides for an increase of the speed limit at school crossings, and this is a matter I query. I believe that at zebra crossings, school signs, or even with a policeman on duty, too many motorists drive at a speed higher than the limit. This is an unfortunate situation. The member for Bragg said that a

top limit should be set, and referred to the fact that he was not absolutely certain whether the present limit pleased him. The member for Victoria admitted that he sometimes drove his vehicle at more than 68 m.p.h.; we could all probably admit that fact, if we were truthful about it. As legislators we should consider seriously the effect of these speed limits.

I could not understand the attitude of the member for Eyre when he said that the Government should encourage people to buy motor vehicles powered to suit their requirements. If I bought my 18-year-old son a Mini Minor (or he bought it himself), I think that that car would be capable of travelling at more than 68 m.p.h. The member for Glenelg in his preamble referred to the speed limit of wheelchairs. I am not sure whether the honourable member wanted us to demonstrate how fast a wheelchair could travel, but this aspect is not an issue in this debate. I was impressed by and interested in the figures quoted by the member for Davenport, who pointed out that fatalities from road traffic accidents exceeded the number of people killed in wars that have been fought throughout the world since 1939. This, too, is something we should take time to consider seriously. The statistics presented by the member for Davenport are worth bearing in mind. If we continue as we are going at present (that is, driving at higher speeds and becoming owners of more highly-powered vehicles), I do not know where the carnage will end. It is important that we realize that something constructive, which is what I like about the Bill, is now being done: an attempt is being made to reduce speeds, which play an important part in the road toll. Statistics compiled by the Road Safety Council prove that two things are prevalent in road accidents: speed and alcohol. I do not intend to go into the matter of drunken driving but, unfortunately, one of the major problems concerning alcohol is that, when an intoxicated person drives a vehicle, he is inclined to drive faster than he normally would.

Mr. Chapman: How do you know that?

Mr. MAX BROWN: The honourable member should study the council's statistics. Australia is a thinly populated country and, generally speaking, one of flat terrain, and its cities and towns are widely spaced. Those three points must be borne in mind when considering vehicle speeds; so, too, should car manufacturers. I believe that, if the car manufacturer (whether General Motors-Holden's, Chrysler Australia Limited or Ford) continues to manufacture powerful vehicles capable of being driven at high speeds, it can only lead to further carnage on the roads. Car manufacturers will soon have to think about where they are leading the Australian people.

Whyalla is about 250 road miles (400 km) from Adelaide, and the people of Whyalla (probably of Adelaide, too) boast that they have driven from Whyalla to Adelaide in four hours, some in 3½ hours. Over the first three miles (4.8 km) from Whyalla to Adelaide there is a speed limit of 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h). About 45 miles (72 km) from Whyalla is the thriving metropolis of Port Augusta, where there is a speed limit of 35 m.p.h. (56 km/h) extending to about two miles (3.2 km) on the Adelaide side of Port Augusta. Unfortunately, one does not travel through Port Pine. Then one teaches Warnertown. Even in such a small place as Warnertown there is a speed limit for about 2 miles. I will not refer to the Rocky River District or to Crystal Brook. When people boast about travelling 250 miles in about four hours at an average speed of 60 m.p.h. (96 km/h), it probably means travelling at speeds between 70 m.p.h. (112 km/h) and 80 m.p.h. (128 km/h) at times, and this perturbs me. Under the Bill, we will be setting a standard of about

68 m.p.h. (110 km/h), which, I believe, is still too high. However, as it is a recommended speed, I am willing to accept it. At least it is a step in the right direction in doing something about the overall speed limit. Regarding the 68 m.p.h. limit, I question members who drive a motor car (and most of us do). If any of us were driving on a country road at a speed of 60 m.p.h., I wonder how many vehicles we would pass and how many vehicles would pass us.

Mr. Nankivell: Very few pass me.

Mr. MAX BROWN: If the member for Mallee were driving at 60 m.p.h., he would pass fewer vehicles on the road than would pass him. We must bear in mind that comparatively few motorists, particularly in country areas, drive at 68 m.p.h.: most of them drive at speeds between 70 m.p.h and 75 m.p.h. (120 km/h)

Mr. Gunn: Do you think the Bill will stop that practice?

Mr. MAX BROWN: I believe it is a positive step forward and a positive attempt to reduce speeding. The Bill will vest the Police Force with the legal right to apprehend drivers who flout speed limits and, for that reason alone, it will help reduce the road toll. If members were to study statistics compiled by the Road Safety Council, they would find that speed plays a major part in road accidents. That is the whole crux of the matter. In conclusion, I question the speed limit in city areas (and again I refer to Whyalla which, after all, is a city), because the Bill permits an increased speed limit within city areas.

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

Mr. MAX BROWN: I was saying before dinner that the provision in the Bill, increasing the present speed limit in city areas from 35 m.p.h. (56 km/h) to 60 km/h, which is about 37 m.p.h., causes me some concern. I accept this provision, mainly because speed limits in city areas will now be uniform. In Whyalla, I live in a long street that lends itself to speeding by motorists. Police records and reports of court cases show that more speeding offences are committed in my street than in any other street in Whyalla. I am afraid that this situation will not be much improved by increasing the speed limit by about 2 m.p.h. (3.2 km/h), as provided in the Bill. That is the only unfortunate aspect of this Bill. Perhaps in future the overall picture can be examined, having regard to conditions throughout the country.

The member for Bragg referred to the increase in the speed at which people are permitted to drive past schools at times when children are proceeding to or from schools. I think it is fair to say that, when school crossings are not policed in some way, motorists exceed the present limit of 15 m.p.h. (24 km/h). Probably all of us have been guilty of this offence at some time. The Bill provides for an increase in this limit to 30 km/h (about 18 m.p.h.), a speed at which most people probably pass schools now. I hope that this provision will lead to less speeding past schools. I support the Bill, which I believe is a major step forward in controlling the speed at which people drive, speed being one of the prime causes of the carnage on South Australian roads.

Mr. NANKIVELL (Mallee): At the outset, I want to say that I have no option but to support the Bill, because it contains necessary provisions converting miles an hour under the Imperial system to kilometres an hour under the metric system. However, the Minister's second reading explanation focused attention on the imposition of an absolute speed limit in open areas. I have the reputation of being a fast driver. On this score, like the Minister of Works, I make no apology. Unfortunately, unlike his case, I do not believe the Government will provide me with

an aeroplane to enable me to make up my extra travelling time once the speed restrictions are imposed.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: We aren't getting an aeroplane.

Mr. NANKIVELL: All I mean is that the Minister will need an aeroplane if, in future, he is to travel in the same time the same distance that he travels now. I hope I can make some constructive comments about one or two aspects of the legislation. The Bill provides for an absolute speed limit, irrespective of the type of vehicle involved; I shall be able to drive a broken-down Mini Minor or a clapped-out Holden at 110 km/h (68 m.p.h.)

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You'd never get it up to that speed.

Mr. NANKIVELL: That would be no problem; day after day I pass such vehicles doing that speed. This is one matter that disturbs me. This is an absolute speed limit that does not discriminate between vehicles.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It does.

Mr. NANKIVELL: It cannot possibly do so; it is an absolute speed limit, as new section 48 provides that a person shall not drive a vehicle at a greater speed than 110 km/h (68 m.p.h.). That provision does not specify anything else: it merely says that, if I drive in excess of that speed, it will cost me up to \$100 if I am caught. There are other important aspects of this matter. This Bill has been introduced because of road safety. Government members, who have quoted the Road Safety Council and other reputable authorities in connection with the problems associated with road safety, have made some sincere speeches on this Bill. Members continually highlight the aspect that speed kills. However, one can kill oneself on Duke's Highway when travelling not at 100 m.p.h. (160 km/h) but at 40 m.p.h. (64 km/h), because there is no relationship between speed and the type of road to which the speed is being applied. One of my colleagues stated that a visiting American had said he was amazed that we in this State could drive at the speeds at which we drove on roads of the standard we have.

Road safety and the speeds at which one travels on the roads should be tied more closely to the standard of road construction. It is dangerous to impose an absolute speed limit, as many roads are incapable of sustaining traffic travelling at that speed. On the other hand, sections of some roads have been reconstructed and, because the road has a wide pavement and is free of obstruction, it would be safe for one to travel thereon in excess of the speed limit, without danger to the public or to oneself. These things are relative. The Government should be thinking not of an absolute speed limit but of relating an absolute speed to road standards and, as road standards improve, so the absolute speed at which one can travel on that road should be increased. Indeed, this is the pattern in other countries. If one travels on the autobahns in Europe, the M highways in England, or on any main arterial roads the standard of construction of which is designed for vehicles travelling at speed, one is permitted to travel at speeds that are safe on those roads. However, on certain sections of our highways it would not be safe to drive at, say, more than 40 m.p.h. (64 km/h). I have raised this matter with the Highways Department, and I raise it now, because on some of our main highways not only is the pavement far too narrow but also there is a drop of about 6in. (15 m), or an absolute gutter, on the sides of the road. In a recent accident five people were killed not because of speed but because the woman driver got the wheels of her car off the pavement and, not knowing how to correct her vehicle, she overcorrected, trying to swing

back on to the road, and her car overturned. She would have been travelling not at 100 m.p.h. (160 km/h) but at about 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h), and she was killed because the road on which she was travelling was substandard.

I agree that, for most of our roads, motor vehicles and certainly for most of our drivers, it would not be unreasonable to impose an absolute speed limit. However, this matter must be kept in perspective and must be related to the vehicle, its weight and its roadworthiness. I hope that the Government will restrict speed limits through towns and, wherever else necessary, impose restrictions. I hope, too, that where possible the Government will increase, and not decrease, speed limits in certain zones.

One of the major problems in this respect is that of policing laws. All members would agree that no law has any value unless it can be policed. It is no good our saying that one cannot drive at more than 110 km/h, unless that speed limit can be enforced, and we certainly cannot enforce it on our main arterial roads with the present level of road patrols: all we can do is operate spot radar checks and hope that occasionally the police patrols get behind vehicles travelling at excessive speeds. I do not believe it will be possible physically to police an absolute speed limit of this sort.

The member for Flinders has been concerned about the length of vehicles. The Road Traffic Act specifies the distance that must be kept between trucks that travel in convoy. One of the problems that we experience on our roads today is that we have a heavy volume of road transport. Many times at night I have been behind a convoy of four or five semi-trailers of the maximum permissible length of 66ft. (21.5 m), to which the member for Flinders referred, and I could not pass the convoy. The drivers of these semi-trailers will not open the gap between them sufficiently to enable one to pass and, if they are to be permitted to travel at 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h), one will not be able to pass them if one is restricted to 70 m.p.h. (112 km/h). The Government is permitting these sorts of vehicle to travel at 50 m.p.h., and a person driving an ordinary motor vehicle is supposed to overtake them singly, or in convoy, without exceeding the maximum speed limit of 68 m.p.h. or 110 km/h. If the speed limit is enforced to the letter of the law, a safety hazard will be created. If I am not permitted to exceed that speed when overtaking, say, a semi-trailer, I could be placed in a dangerous position at the crest of a hill when I try to pass a semi-trailer with another vehicle coming towards me. This provision must be much more elastic.

I refer now to another factor regarding safety on our roads at night. Members have referred to dipping lights and other safety provisions on vehicles. However, it is not obligatory at this stage for manufacturers to provide the sort of equipment that can be optional extras on Japanese vehicles. I refer, for instance, to a blinking light which one can operate if one is in difficulties so that approaching drivers can be warned of one's presence on the side of a road. If one pulls up on the shoulder of a road with just a parking light—

The Hon. D. H. McKee: What for?

Mr. NANKIVELL: For all sorts of reasons. We have for too long overlooked the need to subject vehicles to safety inspections. If it is possible to require safety checks in New Zealand, it is possible to require them in other places. It is not simply a question of speed; if a car's brakes, lights and tyres are satisfactory, there is a greater prospect of the driver being safe even at the tremendous speed of 110 km/h than there would be if he had regrooved tyres, which applied before the member for Goyder

introduced his magnificent Bill! If we emphasize some of these other aspects, in addition to the question of speed, we will be acting responsibly in the interest of the motorists whom we are trying to protect. As I said earlier, I can do nothing except support the legislation, but I hope that many of the points I have made will be heeded by the Minister.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I support the Bill, and I also support many of the comments that the member for Mallee made regarding the types of road in this State and the type of maintenance carried out on many of our major highways. We do not have roads of adequate standard, partly as a result of lack of maintenance. Some members, including the member for Mallee, said that it was difficult for motorists to pass transports operating in convoys of four or more. For this type of vehicle we should provide a pavement to which it can pull over when it needs to leave the main pavement on inclines and especially on open flat roads; in this way the heavy vehicle can move out of the main line of traffic. It is just as difficult for the driver of a heavy transport to pull over as it is for the average motorist, and let us remember that the tyres of heavy transports may be worth \$300 each. Heavy transports provide effective transport for country areas, for the metropolitan area, and for the Eastern States. Some people who attack heavy transport forget that it provides an efficient service. In the main, heavy transport operators have abided by the law, except when there was a ridiculous speed limit. The member for Eyre said that we should probably allow a higher speed limit than 68 mph (110 km/h) for the ordinary motorist, but I do not accept that.

I believe that, when heavy transports had to travel at low speeds and private motorists were able to travel at high speeds, some private motorists did not see the heavy transports in sufficient time to avoid a collision, and often the cars ploughed into the back of heavy transports. Now, there will be considerably less difference between the speed limits for private cars and heavy transports. As a result, there will be much less chance of the type of accident occurring that I have referred to. I therefore support the move to increase speed limits for heavy transports to 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h) and for private cars to 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h). Some Ministers and perhaps other people with departmental cars may find that under this legislation a given journey will take longer, if they abide by the law. One wonders whether this is not the first move in the direction of providing executive jets for such people; perhaps Ministers will be able to hire the jets from companies. Let us watch this matter to see whether my prediction is correct. I was a passenger in a Ministerial car one evening when it travelled at a much greater speed than 68 m.p.h.

It has been proved in other countries that reducing the speed limit leads to a saving in fuel, a saving of lives, and a reduction in the number and extent of injuries. The State of New York in America recently announced that a reduction in the speed limit to 55 m.p.h. (88 km/h) resulted in the number of deaths being reduced by 30 per cent. If we can reduce the number of deaths in this State by even 25 per cent as a result of reducing the speed limit to 68 m.p.h., that will be a significant reduction; 200 more people, mainly young people under the age of 30 years, will still be living. So, why should we not reduce the speed limit to 68 m.p.h.? The question of conserving energy is only a short-term question, because in the long term energy supplies may not be a problem in Australia.

I support the provision for regulations regarding tyre pressures, because the old legislation did not cover all classifications of tyre available today, particularly those for heavy transports. The maximum specification of some tyres with metallic cords and rayon cords has been in excess of 110 lb. per square inch (758 kPa). Some transport operators have broken the Law for some time by running their trucks with tyre pressures greater than 110 lb. per square inch, because it would be uneconomic and dangerous to run their trucks with lower tyre pressures. When there are so many types of tyre and so many types of vehicle, we should cover the matter by regulation and specify the pressures for each type of tyre. Accusations have been made that the manufacture of high-powered cars should be stopped. I have supported this view for a long time, but there is some logic in the argument that a good driver understands his vehicle and is less likely to get into trouble with a high-powered vehicle, because of his ability to get out of dangerous situations, than he would be in a low-powered vehicle. A driver with experience in handling high-powered vehicles is not really a menace on the road.

I turn now to the matter of the drinking driver. In this country we will eventually reach the stage where it will be illegal to drive a vehicle after consuming alcohol. That will take place within the foreseeable future. If we wish to save lives and make the roads safe for the responsible driver, that is the action we should be taking.

High speed is not always responsible for accidents. A driver may be travelling at 100 m.p.h. (160 km/h), quite sober, driving sensibly on the correct side of the road, although travelling at a speed some people would call irresponsible. Another driver may be travelling at 25 m.p.h. (40 km/h), so drunk that he has no effective control of his car, with the result that he moves into the path of the oncoming car, causing a major catastrophe. Where high speed and alcohol consumption are combined in one driver, a real problem arises. Alcohol is a major contributing factor in more than 50 per cent of the bad accidents occurring in South Australia. This is an area in which, as legislators, we must act. In Victoria the blood-alcohol limit is back to .05 per cent, although in South Australia it is still at .08 per cent. There is some merit in this State's moving gradually to a lower level, as in Victoria.

Even though I consume alcohol I would automatically support a move to provide that if people drink they must not drive; I would do this for the sake of safety on our roads. We are taking the right action by reducing the overall speed limit. I do not support the move to increase the speed of vehicles passing schools. It is wrong that this should be increased to 18.6 m.p.h. (30 km/h), and it is not a move toward avoiding accidents. While I respect the work of road safety bodies in reviewing legislation, sometimes for the sake of reaching a round figure the real problem is overlooked. I do not say this decision is wrong, but I would prefer that there be a speed closer to 15 m.p.h. (25 km/h). That is my personal view.

Most provisions of the Bill deal with the change to metric measurements. We know what happened in the change to decimal currency; it cost the average man a large sum of money. Let us be warned that, as we go to metric measurement throughout Australia, we will have greater inflation. The conversion of instruments to metric measurements will involve great expense for the man in the street. The change will cost Government departments a large sum of money, but the man in the street will pay it. I support the second reading.

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): I support the Bill. Most of the points in it have been well covered, so I will restrict my

remarks to the main provision of the Bill dealing with the maximum speed limit of 110 km/h. With the exception of the member for Eyre, I would cover as many miles as does any member in this House. We travel on many different types of road—first-class sealed roads, narrow sealed roads, floating surfaces, corrugated gravel roads, drift sand, mud, and ironstone gibbers. Name it, and we travel on it! It is not necessary to introduce a speed limit of 110 km/h for these roads, because one is seldom able to drive at that speed. It is more dangerous to drive at 45 m.p.h. (72 km/h) on some roads than to drive at twice that speed on the first-class highways. I am one of the slowest drivers in this House; in my own area I am noted for my slow driving. I never travel at more than 60 m.p.h. (97 km/h), and most of the time I drive at 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h). I enjoy driving and I like to see the country, in which I take a great interest. If one leaves early, one is always on Lime.

As I drive at this slower speed, many cars pass me in the course of a journey and I am able to observe the mistakes of other drivers. It is not uncommon for a car to travel across a double yellow line when passing. Many drivers, I am sure, are quite unaware of the yellow line. They are absorbed in their thoughts and do not know what they have done. Others pass on floating surfaces and immediately cross in front of the vehicle they have passed, showering it with stones and often breaking the windscreen, but they are totally unaware of this and drive merrily on their way. I am sure much could be achieved by a publicity campaign drawing the attention of drivers to these common mistakes.

Most fatal accidents occur on country roads, and I am always amazed to read in the press of head-on collisions on straight sections of road. Much of the difficulty is due to drivers inexperienced in country conditions. Many drivers who are quite capable on sealed roads are entirely out of their depth on other surfaces. An experienced country driver travelling at 80 m.p.h. (130 km/h) is probably safer than the inexperienced driver travelling at 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h). Over-inflated tyres could cause a car travelling at 40 m.p.h. (64 km/h) on a corrugated road to overturn. Many people do not realize the danger. We will always have fatal accidents because people take risks but, as legislators, we must try to keep accidents to a minimum.

I am disappointed to see that no provision has been made for a speed limit for cars towing caravans. On unsealed roads, caravans and semi-trailers create a terrific dust hazard; a caravan or a semi-trailer can do more damage to a dusty surface than four motor cars can do. It is impossible to overtake a car towing a caravan and travelling at 50 m.p.h. (80 km/h) on this type of road unless the driver is prepared to risk driving through the dust haze created when the wind is from a certain direction, without knowing what is ahead. I had an experience of this last Easter whilst driving from Quorn to Hawker. As honourable members know, many caravans travel during the Easter period, and I had to drive at 35 m.p.h. (56 km/h) for the journey, because of the number of caravans on the road. If I had taken a risk and passed one, there would be another ahead, and it was impossible to pass them all. Therefore, I had to drive slowly. I should like to have had a provision dealing with this aspect included in the Bill, but perhaps we may consider it in future. I support the Bill.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): I have one or two comments only to make about this Bill. I cannot see any reason for a speed limit on the freeway: there should

be a minimum speed at which motorists must travel. Also, slow traffic should travel in the left-hand side line, with the middle and other lane to be used by faster traffic. Coming to Adelaide and using the freeway, I find it necessary to weave in and out of traffic if I travel at 60 m.p.h. (96 km/h). I support the contention that there should be zones in which a motorist can travel at a fast speed, and the freeway is an area on which these zones should apply. I cannot understand why country people are worrying about this speed limit.

A speed limit of 35 m.p.h. (56.8 km/h) applies in Adelaide, and I travel from Henley Beach to the city at this speed. Occasionally I travel at 40 m.p.h. (64 km/h), but many cars pass me whilst I am travelling at this speed. Many of them swing in front of me, and I have to brake to avoid colliding with them. However, rarely does one see a person apprehended for speeding in and around Adelaide: perhaps many more drivers who offend should be apprehended, because these people may either kill themselves or someone else by their method of driving. We should not worry about a speed limit of 68 m.p.h. (110 km/h) on country roads. It may seem that I am criticizing the Police Force by what I have been saying, but a policeman will not sit on a road on which a speed of 80 m.p.h. (128 km/h) can be used with safety and apprehend offenders. Usually, a police officer will choose the Port Augusta to Port Pirie road or the highway on either side of Murray Bridge, which are both places at which many road deaths have occurred. I have confidence in the Police Force, and I think its members will use commonsense by supervising the danger spots.

I support what the member for Fisher said about drivers who drink, and I believe we should adopt a system of random breath tests. This may be considered a restriction of liberty, but many motorists have their licence checked periodically, and that is not considered an infringement of personal liberty. If a driver is stopped, I see no infringement of personal liberty if the policeman is trying to ascertain whether he is in a fit condition to drive a motor vehicle on our roads.

Mr. Coumbe: What about the railways?

Mr. McANANEY: If we had a good, fast, rail service (and I do not know whether we will get one) there would not be as many people on our roads, and perhaps those who used the roads could travel faster but safely. There should be a minimum speed limit on the freeway, and people should not be allowed to wander from one side of it to the other. Many drivers straddle the lines between the lanes, but that is a dangerous practice I think this Bill is necessary, and I support it, but I should like to see city roads policed to a greater extent so that the obviously crazy drivers can be apprehended.

Mr. ARNOLD (Chaffey): Obviously, clause 5 is the clause that has created most interest. It repeals section 48 of the principal Act and in its place puts an absolute speed limit of 110 km/h. I tend to agree with the member for Heysen that on open roads of good quality there should not be an absolute speed limit, although the onus should still be on the driver to prove that he was not driving dangerously. I consider that five points should be considered in this matter. First, we are to have an absolute speed limit of 110 km/h. Secondly, we must consider the ability of the vehicle to travel safely at this speed. No doubt many vehicles on our roads cannot travel safely at 110 km/h, but many vehicles can travel adequately at that speed and much greater speeds on suitable roads.

Thirdly, we must consider the quality of the road, and this may cause a problem. In this State several excellent high-

ways have been constructed through country areas. They replace old roads and are wider with fewer bends, bumps, and other hazards, and provide an almost perfect road surface on which to travel. However, several problems have been created. I find when travelling between Adelaide and Riverland that once I reach the excellent highway there seems little to keep my mind alert whilst driving, and the tendency is to let the mind wander and not concentrate on the road. Perhaps this attitude accounts to some extent for the accidents that occur on new highways. Another factor to be considered is the distance to be travelled. The member for Fisher is adamant that the speed limit should not exceed 110 km/h. On the other hand, the honourable member has only short distances to travel.

Mr. Evans: I drive to Peterborough on Fridays.

Mr. ARNOLD: But not regularly, and this must be considered. The honourable member lives close to the metropolitan area and to his place of work. Another point is the common sense of the driver and his natural ability to drive. However, there is no means by which we can accurately assess the common sense and natural ability of a driver. The member for Frome has said that it is possible to turn a car over on a corrugated road at 40 m.p.h. (64 km/h), and I do not think that anyone would disagree with that. There is no means by which we can legislate as regards common sense and the natural ability of a driver. Until this can be achieved our problems will remain.

The member for Mallee referred to road maintenance. The Minister will probably recall that on October 11, 1973, I asked him a question about road maintenance and the maintenance of road shoulders. The member for Mallee said that he believed that this matter was an important factor in the accident rate on open highways, and I agree entirely with him. If there is a 6 in. (152 mm) drop off the road and an inexperienced driver goes off the edge of the road, his natural tendency is to try immediately to get back on to the road. In reply to my question the Minister said:

The Highways Department is continually seeking improved methods of maintaining road shoulders in a satisfactory condition. Current investigations include wider sealed pavements, edge lining, control of pavement and shoulder material, compaction and encouragement of prostrate grasses. A satisfactory and reasonably economic answer to the problem of fretting at the edge of sealed surfaces has not yet been found.

I recognize that this is a problem, and that is why I asked my question. It would be difficult to keep the edges of highways for a considerable distance throughout the State adequately graded, thus eliminating the 6 in. drop off the edge. I believe that this is an important factor and I am sure that many accidents are caused by the drop off the edge of the road, causing the tyres to deflate or the driver trying to get back on to pavement too quickly, thus turning his vehicle over. Although I support the Bill in principle and the measures it provides, I do not entirely agree with the speed of 110 km/h. I prefer that the speed remain as it is and that the onus be on the driver concerned to prove to the court that he was driving with due care. I support the Bill.

The SPEAKER: If the Minister speaks he closes the debate.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport): I think it is time the debate was closed. My comments will be brief. All kinds of view have been expressed this afternoon and evening. I suppose it is fair to say that when we enter the area of road safety (or local government) we find that the House has more experts in those

subjects than in any others placed before it. It has been interesting to note members' varying comments. Some have said that the poor condition of our roads is the cause of accidents, whereas others have said that the good condition of our roads lends itself to excessive speeds. I will leave it to members to decide which is the correct version.

The only point I make is that there was an innuendo, with regard to the condition of the roads, that the Highways Department was not doing all it should do. I refute that completely and say that South Australia is probably the most fortunate State in the Commonwealth because our Highways Department builds and maintains roads better than does any other State in Australia. The question of alcohol was introduced into the debate. As alcohol has no bearing on the Bill, I do not think I would be entitled to reply to it, even though several members dealt with it at length. As no member really opposed the Bill, I look forward to support for the second reading. I thank those members who spoke for their contributions to the debate. I was interested in the comments which members made but which had no reference to the Bill.

Bill read a second time

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5—'General speed limit.'

Mr. BECKER: Can the Minister say what programme will be necessary to replace the various speed signs?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport): We are now working on a programme of preparing the various signs that it will be necessary to change, virtually overnight, on June 30. Obviously, it will not be possible to complete the whole task overnight. From memory, I think we will be replacing the mileage posts with kilometre posts, but not as many posts will be put in immediately as will be put in eventually. I think that every other post will be replaced first. Some signs will probably be erected before June 30 but will be bagged over. The whole programme is designed and the effort is directed toward a complete changeover on June 30. It will be as complete as practicable, but obviously we cannot complete the entire programme overnight.

Clause passed.

Clause 6—"Speed limits."

Mr. BECKER: I move:

In paragraph (c) to strike out "30" and insert "25".

By my amendment, I seek to reduce the speed limit past schools from 30 km/h to 25 km/h, which is 15½ m.p.h., the closest we can get, using metric measurements, to the current speed limit past schools. We consider that a speed limit past schools of 30 km/h, which is about 19 m.p.h., is too high. We believe we should do all in our power to preserve what is one of the most valuable safety measures in Australia. In South Australia, we have set the standard for Australia in having a strict speed limit past schools, flashing lights at school crossings, and school monitors, we have probably the highest safety standard of any of the States. In its 1972-73 report, which was issued only a few days ago, the Road Safety Council, acknowledging the valuable work of monitors at schools, states:

In December last year, 4 013 certificates of service were distributed to 115 schools for presentation at break-up ceremonies. Council officers attended as many of these functions as possible in order to acknowledge the excellent services of the boy or girl monitors. Up to June 30, 1973, there were no serious or fatal accidents on crossings controlled by school monitors. "Children crossing" flags and special flame-coloured vests for the monitors were supplied by the council.

I am sure that thousands of parents throughout the State would acknowledge the wonderful work of these school-children. I would not want to place any child in jeopardy at school crossings. I know that police pay strict attention to these crossings, making sure that the speed limit is observed. The member for Stuart said that speedometers would be marked only in calibrations of 10 kilometres; that is not correct. The member for Gouger has just purchased a Valiant Regal motor car, the calibrations on the speedometer being marked out at each five kilometres.

The main numbering is in calibrations of 10 kilometres, and it is divided into calibrations of five kilometres. His speedometer clearly shows the speed of 25 km/h, and in a yellow colour the equivalent in miles an hour is shown. Now that at least one range of motor vehicle has adopted this type of speedometer, I am sure that other manufacturers will follow suit, so that drivers will be able to recognize on their speedometers without difficulty 25 km/h. I believe, to be safe, people like me, who have older motor vehicles, will stick to the 15 m.p.h. limit past schools. As a parent of primary schoolchildren, I am sure that all parents feel as I do that we should do everything we can to preserve the 15 m.p.h. limit (or its near equivalent) past our schools.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The big danger with this legislation is that members become emotional, rather than rational, in dealing with it. The member for Hanson has tended to become rather emotional on this issue. Of course, it is the sort of issue on which one can become emotional fairly effectively.

Dr. Eastick: That sounds strange coming from someone who, on another occasion, rubbished the member for Fisher.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I do not know what the Leader is talking about. We are not dealing with another occasion: we are talking about this clause, about which the member for Fisher has not spoken. I am trying to deal with this matter seriously, and not trying to make it into a joke, as the Leader is trying to do.

Dr. Eastick: It's no joke

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: All the conversions in the Bill are in rounded 10's. Deliberately, the Australian Transport Advisory Council has avoided using fives.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Why?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As the member for Stuart said earlier, simply because the information given to the expert committee, which serves A.T.A.C., by the manufacturers was to the effect that it was extremely unlikely that speedometers would be marked other than in calibrations of 10 km/h. The member for Hanson has said that the member for Gouger has bought a Valiant whose speedometer is marked in fives. That is fine, but it is probably an exception to the rule.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You don't have 15 m.p.h. marked on a speedometer now.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I defy the honourable member or any other member to find a speedometer that will sit on 15 m.p.h. steadily.

Mr. Evans: Or on 30 km/h.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: When they are in low speeds, speedometers jump.

Mr. Mathwin: No.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Perce the Pom from Glenelg knows everything. I am saying that that is the situation; an accurate reading cannot be obtained at low speeds.

Mr. MATHWIN. On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has called me Perce the Pom. My name is not Perce, although I may be a Pom. However, as I look



around the Chamber and see the colour of the faces of the members in here, I realize that the Minister is not a thoroughbred Australian either.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am sorry if I offended the member for Glenelg. I am astounded that the member for Hanson (presumably with the backing of his Party) considers it desirable to reduce from 30 km/h to 25 km/h the proposed speed limit when a person is driving between signs bearing the words "School" or "Playground" at a time when children are proceeding to or from the school or playground, yet he does not consider it necessary to reduce the speed limit of 30 km/h when passing a school bus that has stopped for the purpose of allowing children to board it or alight from it. It is, therefore, all right in the honourable member's opinion for one to pass a school bus, from which children are alighting and rushing into a school, at 30 km/h, but it is not all right for one to pass a school at that speed. The point is clearly demonstrated: this is an emotional issue that will not hold water. This clause has been advanced by the Road Traffic Board, and, if any member is willing to say that he has more expertise than the Commissioner of Highways, the Commissioner of Police or a leading town clerk, all of whom have the backing of the staff of the Road Traffic Board, which analyses every traffic situation, he should support the amendment. The Government will support the clause.

Mr. MATHWIN: I support the amendment because I believe the present speed limit should not be increased. Children are the greatest investment that this country has, and we must guard them jealously, and should take advantage of any opportunity at our disposal to do so. Merely because we have an excellent accident-free record on these crossings, the Government believes that the speed limit should be increased to 30 km/h. This is a mistake. From my experience of driving cars with speedometers marked in kilometres, I know that they are calibrated in lots of 5 km/h. I would not, therefore, see any difficulties being experienced in this respect. I have driven cars having speedometer needles which flop around at 30 km/h. However, they do not all do that, and modern cars would do it even less. The Minister has referred to members' becoming emotional. However, if that is the case, I will, to protect the children of this State, join the club and become emotional, too. The committee to which the Minister referred avoided the fact that manufacturers want to keep the calibrations on the speedometers in lots of 10 km/h. I believe that this issue has been dodged.

The Minister said that the member for Hanson did not try to amend the speed limit involved where children alight from school buses. However, that is irrelevant as the Committee is dealing now with a specific area in which children are walking. These children are pedestrians who are coming from all sides of the roads, and hundreds use these crossings at times. Although the Minister is willing to restrict persons to a speed of 10 km/h when passing a tram stop where adults are crossing roads, he considers that a speed limit of 30 km/h is good enough at school crossings. Well, it is not good enough for me, and I therefore support the amendment.

Mr. RUSSACK: This provision has been introduced in the interests of road safety. The previous speed limit of 15 m.p.h. (24 km/h) has proved to be safe. The 1973 report of the Road Safety Council, to which the member for Hanson referred, stated that there have been no serious accidents at school crossings. Admittedly, we have in the

past had the assistance of monitors at these crossings. Because the present speed limit has proved to be safe, I support the amendment.

Mr. BECKER: This is not an emotional issue but a matter of practical common sense. I should have thought the Minister would be willing to reconsider this suggestion and refer the matter back to the Road Traffic Board. I have my own opinion regarding the board, as I have been trying, unsuccessfully, to have "stop" signs erected in certain places. Instead, I have been able to get only stupid rumble strips.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Well, why don't you see the Road Traffic Board about it?

Mr. BECKER: I am just about to do something about it. I have seen these rumble strips smashed all over the roads, and they have caused more trouble than anything else.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Where?

Mr. BECKER: At Adelphi Terrace and in other places, where cars and trucks have travelled over them.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Do you think they should be removed from Adelphi Terrace?

Mr. BECKER: I think there should be a better system. The Road Traffic Board should re-examine this matter. We have had an outstanding record, and I will indeed be critical if vehicles travel through school crossings at about 20 m.p.h. (30 km/h) and accidents occur. I wish the Police Force had sufficient personnel to enable it to station motor traffic constables on school crossings every day. Unfortunately, however, that is not possible. We cannot measure in monetary terms the lives of our children, and we should maintain the present speed limit past schools.

I refer now to the passing of school buses. Where flashing lights are installed there is usually a white line down the centre of the road, and I do not remember seeing school buses parked in such positions. Indeed, they would not be permitted to do so. The children walk straight from the bus on to the footpath without crossing the road. As the Minister realizes, attempts have been made to get a school crossing on Tapley Hill Road, but the Road Traffic Board is not keen about it, believing that, because it is a narrow road with trees along it, it would be unsafe to place a crossing on it. However, there is a crossing on Marion Road, which is a wide road and on which motorists overtake stationary vehicles at this crossing. There are, therefore, dangers in relation to certain crossings. I do not want motor vehicles travelling over school crossings at 20 m.p.h.

The Committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes (17)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Becker (teller), Blacker, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Mathwin, McAnaney, Nankivell, Russack, Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (22)—Messrs. Broomhill and Max Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran, Crimes, Duncan, Dunstan, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, McRae, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo (teller), and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Gunn and Rodda. Noes—Messrs. Hudson and Wells.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negated.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 8.56 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, February 28, at 2 p.m.