

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Wednesday, October 16, 1974

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

**PETITION: WATER RATES**

Mr. EVANS presented a petition signed by 155 persons who expressed concern at the present inequitable system of estimating and charging water and sewerage rates, particularly in the present period of high inflation. This practice had resulted in water and sewerage rates being increased, in many instances, by more than 100 per cent, which was an unfair, discriminatory and grossly excessive impost on them and which would cause hardship to many residents on fixed incomes. The petitioners prayed that the House of Assembly would take action to correct the present inequitable and discriminatory situation.

Petition received.

**QUESTIONS**

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

**HILLS SEWERAGE**

In reply to Mr. EVANS (August 29).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: When the sewerage scheme for Blackwood-Belair was investigated and submitted to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, the proposed works and programme were discussed in detail with officers of the Mitcham City Council. The area at Hawthorndene covered by the petition was not included in the first stage of the scheme as recommended by the committee and approved by the Government, because:

1. The area could not be drained into the main pumping station at Hawthorndene, and a further pumping station and rising main would be required to serve the area.
2. At the time of the investigation, the development at Hawthorndene was less than that in areas included in stage I, and the council and local board of health considered that the need for sewerage in this area was less than the other areas.

At the time it was accepted that Hawthorndene would be in stage II of the sewerage for Blackwood-Belair, and would probably receive a high priority, but that all residential areas in Blackwood-Belair would be examined at the completion of stage I, and priorities determined in accordance with development and need. It is planned that, on the completion of the approved stage I in the 1975-76 financial year, work will continue on stage II of the scheme.

The Minister of Works has informed local residents several times that it is not intended to depart from the priorities already agreed to by the council and recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for the stage I scheme. He has stated that, towards completion of approved stage I, an examination of all unsewered areas in Blackwood-Belair will be made and priorities determined in accordance with the need, development, and revenue return on capital outlay. Detailed planning of the sewerage scheme for the areas not included in the approved scheme has not yet commenced, and it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of when the whole area is likely to be sewered. However, subject to funds being available, Hawthorndene and the more heavily populated areas should be sewered by 1980.

**SHACKS**

In reply to Mr. COUMBE (October 3).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Minister of Lands states that, following a comprehensive review of the present situation by four Cabinet Ministers, the following policy has been determined for shack sites on Crown lands in waterfront areas:

1. Shacks on existing sites will be allowed to remain.
2. No replacement of existing shacks with new shacks will be permitted.
3. No major reconstruction of existing shacks will be permitted.
4. Transfers will be approved when genuine reasons and/or hardships are involved. However, trafficking in the transfer or sale will be discouraged; that is, where sale prices are greater than the value of the improvements. Transfers will not be permitted at prices greater than the value of improvements.
5. Licences will be cancelled where buildings are unsatisfactory.
6. Transfers of licences with unsatisfactory buildings will be refused.
7. Annual licences only will be issued for shacks on the coast reserve.

This policy will also apply to areas in which councils have been issued with licences by the Lands Department authorising them to let shack sites over areas of Crown lands. Applications in respect of sites licensed by the Lands Department direct to shack owners should be made to the department. For areas administered by councils, applications should be made to the particular council concerned. The Shack Site Review Committee will continue its investigations into suitable areas for the establishment of holiday home sites.

**CHRISTIE DOWNS LINE**

In reply to Mr. MATHWIN (August 15).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: A footbridge will be constructed at the Hallett Cove station for the purpose of access to the platforms and for pedestrians to move from side to side of the railway reserve. It has been proposed that a road bridge will be constructed incorporating stairway access to the platforms at Hallett Cove Beach station. The construction of this bridge is the responsibility of the subdivider in the area and a firm date has not yet been set for its construction. If the subdivider does not proceed with this bridge, other facilities will be provided at this location for pedestrians. A footbridge will be constructed about on the line of Sherriffs Road, Lonsdale. Road and rail grade separations will be provided at Lonsdale Road, O'Sullivan Beach Road, Flaxmill Road, Elizabeth Road, and Beach Road.

**UNDERWATER EQUIPMENT**

In reply to Mr. DUNCAN (August 28).

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: Investigations into the matter raised by the honourable member reveal that, at present, no cylinders supplied by the companies referred to in his question are being sold in South Australia. Nothing can prevent people purchasing these types of compressed air cylinders in other States and bringing them here. If the cylinders were manufactured in South Australia or imported into South Australia for subsequent sale in this State, they would be covered under the regulations made pursuant to the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, 1968-1971, as all imported cylinders, if not manufactured to an Australian standard, must be submitted for test before being filled for the first time in Australia.

### TELEVISION RENTAL CHARGES

Dr. EASTICK: Will the Attorney-General obtain from the Prices and Consumer Affairs Branch a report on the number of television rental companies operating in South Australia that have reduced their rental charges following the decision by the Commonwealth Government to abolish radio and television licence fees? When the Commonwealth Government announced that it would abolish radio and television licence fees, it was widely reported that the decision would have a marked influence on the cost of renting these appliances in future. It has been pointed out several times that the cost of the rental, which includes the licence fee, is about \$1 a week. Having this in mind, and because of the publicity originally given to the fact that there would be a reduction in rentals (although I suspect that little or no publicity has been given to the fact that such a reduction has been made), I should appreciate the Attorney's investigating the matter because of the benefit that should accrue to the community, including many people in a more disadvantaged position who use rental facilities, and so that this matter can be ventilated and, if necessary, action taken so that this reduction is passed on.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will obtain a report on the matter.

### THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

Mr. COUMBE: In view of the recently-announced fairly steep increases in third party motor vehicle insurance (an average increase of about 29 per cent in some cases), will the Premier say why an increase of such magnitude is justified and whether he appreciates that the motorist is suffering yet another heavy slug? Further, does he appreciate that third party insurance now is available from only two companies and, therefore, can he explain the reason and the basis for the steep increases in this insurance?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes. It is in order to cover what are known to be the costs of providing this insurance. During the past year the State Government Insurance Commission sustained a loss on third party insurance cover and, although I have not seen the Edward Lumley company's report, I imagine that that company, too, sustained a loss. Certainly, the companies that have withdrawn from the compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance area have had extremely heavy calls in on-going claims on their reserves, and the awards now made by courts have increased at such a rate that adequate provision must be made in premiums to cover the cost of providing this insurance. It is no more than that, and the honourable member knows that the Third Party Insurance Premiums Committee, which makes the recommendations regarding third party insurance premiums, is chaired by a judicial officer who has proper regard to all the factors, including the public interest. If the honourable member can show me how third party insurance cover can be provided for less, given the present costs of meeting claims, I should be extremely grateful.

Mr. Coumbe: What about replying to the question?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The simple reply to the honourable member's question is that the increase in premiums is necessary to cover the cost of the insurance.

### TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister of Education say why the Government is erecting new temporary classrooms, when it has as its stated policy that it will remove existing temporary classrooms? The Minister has been extremely critical in the past of the temporary structures

that were erected during the population explosion in schools a few years ago, and it seems that the Government is now embarking on an extensive programme to erect temporary classrooms. A report in the latest issue of the *Teachers Journal* states:

Concern was expressed at a September meeting of executive that Government money would be spent in providing up to 300 extra temporary classrooms in the future. At present the institute and the Education Department work together on a joint committee which considers all proposals for the provision of extra classrooms. A report of proceedings of the Demac Steering Committee raised several questions, one of which concerned the suitability of Demac buildings as permanent school accommodation. There is no doubt that some buildings will be permanent or at least semi-permanent. This is particularly so where whole schools are planned in Demac. The "permanent" aspects of this type of accommodation pose a problem that needs to be looked at closely. Does it represent a lowering of standards? ... It is understood that new-style temporaries can be supplied at a cost between 40 per cent and 60 per cent cheaper than solid-construction buildings. If this is the case then it is apparent that there is still insufficient money to provide for basic needs in educating children in South Australia.

In view of these comments and the stringent criticism the Minister directed at temporary classrooms that were erected in the past, when the school population was increasing rapidly, whereas at present that population is not increasing at anything like the former rate, it is rather alarming to read this report, setting out an apparent change of face by the Government in relation to this type of building. Therefore, I ask the Minister why these buildings are being erected and why the Government has apparently changed its policy.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No change of Government policy whatever is involved. Demac classrooms (and some of them are already located in schools, while others are being constructed at present) are intended as a permanent addition to facilities in our education system. I do not think that everyone has yet accepted that they can be so regarded, hence the statements in the *Teachers Journal* to which the honourable member has referred. I believe that Demac buildings will provide accommodation equal if not superior to Samcon buildings and at a significantly lower cost. It would be criminal folly by me or the Public Buildings Department if advantage were not taken of the reduction in costs involved, in circumstances where our ability to provide facilities is adversely affected by the inflation in building costs. I think it is probably too early to assess properly what will be the long-term reaction of people associated with education to these buildings. All I can say at this stage is that I am fairly confident that the reaction of people who work in the buildings and of parents and children will be favourable. There is absolutely no reason why the design of such buildings cannot be undertaken in a way that provides the same kind of space a student as would be provided in a solid-construction building.

In addition, the Demac buildings are transportable, so that we are much more able to cope with situations that occur in our schools when the number of students in attendance changes significantly over a period. The buildings can be either transported completely by truck or taken apart, transported, and assembled again on another site. In addition, these buildings are air-conditioned, and carpeted where that is required. Where there are wet areas, vinyl tiling or linoleum is provided. Generally speaking, I should think that most people would say that they were a superior facility to the Samcon buildings, which were also developed by the Public Buildings

Department. As I believe that many members will be interested in these buildings, I shall be happy to arrange for an appropriate tour of inspection for members on both sides, so that they can appreciate at first hand precisely what is involved. I suspect that the South Australian Institute of Teachers, having deferred judgment on the matter, therefore wants to say that it regards the buildings as temporary at this stage. I do not think that judgment is appropriate; I have every confidence in these buildings becoming accepted. I should like to say that the architects of the Public Buildings Department who have been responsible for designing the new Demac buildings have done an excellent job in the interests of education.

Mr. Gunn: There's nothing wrong with Samcon construction.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: True. All I am saying is that the Demac building is superior largely because it has better acoustic properties than has a Samcon building. Whether the appearance of one or other building would be more attractive would depend on individual preference but, for usage purposes, I believe that the Demac building is superior. Public Buildings Department architects, who have been responsible for this matter, and the officers of the department, who pushed ahead with it to ensure that we got the scale of production that would reduce costs substantially are to be commended for the fine work they have done.

#### HAVEN INVESTMENTS

Mr. SLATER: Will the Attorney-General institute an investigation into the activities of a company known as Haven Investments? I have been told that Haven Investments offers land for sale at Karratta Park, Kangaroo Island. I understand the company flies prospective buyers to Kangaroo Island and, on the payment for the land, the company offers to the client reimbursement of the air fare. I further understand that an agent acting on behalf of the company claimed that the Premier's Department in some way authorised or sanctioned the sale of this land. From personal information I have obtained, it seems that the company is a fairly dubious operation.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will have the allegations examined.

#### NOVAR GARDENS FLATS

Mr. BECKER: My question is supplementary to the Question on Notice the Minister of Development and Mines answered yesterday. Can the Minister say why an environmental impact study was not undertaken at Novar Gardens before the Housing Trust decided to let a contract for the construction of 50 flat-type dwellings? Yesterday, in reply to my Question on Notice, the Minister told me that a tender had been let by the trust for the construction of 50 flat-type dwellings at Novar Gardens and that the trust intended to call tenders for the construction of a further 51 similar dwellings. I understand the area in which the flats are to be built is adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the Adelaide Airport and almost opposite the West Torrens rubbish dump. No major shopping centres are close to the area concerned, although there are a few small shopping centres. The major shopping centres in particular are not serviced by regular Municipal Tramways Trust bus services. In view of the location and the interference caused to people living in this type of building in other suburbs near the Adelaide Airport, and because the West Torrens rubbish dump seems to be lit each Sunday morning, I ask the Minister why no environmental impact study was undertaken and whether the trust considers the location is an ideal residential area.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I am not sure where we are getting with the concept of environmental impact statements. No-one more than I supports the concept that environmental impact statements should be carried out in respect of significant developmental projects of a certain magnitude. However, we could get ourselves into a situation where, if a person wished to install a rainwater tank in his backyard, we might have to go through this sort of exercise. There must be a point where it is no longer appropriate to undertake this sort of study, and where other sorts of study should be introduced. We have had in this State for some years now the Planning and Development Act, under which regard is had to environmental considerations and to zoning regulations made under that Act, and district councils and corporations control the land use under those zoning regulations. Regarding the project in question, as it seems to me that that kind of legislation is entirely appropriate, I do not believe it necessary that a full environmental impact study be undertaken. I certainly claim strongly that the Housing Trust considers the environment carefully in respect of all its developmental projects, including the project in question, but I believe that an environmental impact statement would be totally inappropriate for a development of this magnitude.

#### HISTORICAL BOOKS

Mr. RODDA: Will the Premier consider establishing a fund to be used to finance the publication of books relating to this State's early history? Over the weekend, I was privileged to attend a function in the Eyre District, at Wharminda. The Wharminda Progress Association has produced about 500 copies of a book that covers the early history of that part of the State. Indeed, people in several areas in my district have produced similar books, which are important in recording the early history of South Australia. However, in all cases there seems to be the difficulty of arranging finance to undertake such a project. The fund I have in mind would not be a drag on the Government purse, as the grants could be recouped from sales of the books. Obviously, a large segment of the State's valuable history is being lost, with the passing of members of the generation who lived in the late part of the last century and who take with them the valuable knowledge and tradition that have made this State what it is today. I am sure that this is an area in which the Government could help by setting up a revolving fund. I should be pleased if the Premier would investigate this request and I should be only too pleased to help by providing background material.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will consider the honourable member's request.

#### DEPARTMENTAL TELEPHONES

Mr. ARNOLD: Will the Minister of Education revise his departmental policy, which currently does not provide for the installation of a telephone in the residence of a deputy headmaster or a deputy headmistress? This matter has been brought to my attention by the Glossop High School Council. The school has a student enrolment of between 800 and 900 and, as is usual in the case of a school of its kind, the headmaster, the deputy head, and the deputy headmistress live many kilometres apart from each other. In these circumstances it is essential that communication between the three be made as easy as possible, especially before and after school hours. Departmental policy states that, where a telephone is installed in the school and the headmaster requires a telephone in a residence that is separate and departmentally owned, the department will bear the cost

of installation, half the annual rental, and all official calls. The school council believes it is just as essential that the deputy head have the same facilities, in the interests of communication with the school.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is our current policy not to provide telephones in such circumstances. In fact, in reply to a Question on Notice yesterday from the member for Victoria I reaffirmed that decision. The honourable member, while raising one or two points in his question, has asked me to look at the matter again. Without raising expectations that there may be a change, I will examine the question and consider the matter further.

#### MARGARINE QUOTA

Mr. DEAN BROWN: In view of the Commonwealth Government inquiry by Sir John Crawford into the future of the dairying industry, can the Minister of Education, representing the Minister of Agriculture, say whether the South Australian Government intends to proceed with the abolition of margarine quotas before being able even to consider the recommendations following this inquiry? The Commonwealth Government recently established an inquiry into the future of the dairy industry in Australia and Sir John Crawford, a well-known expert in this field, is chairman. The inquiry having started to hear evidence last week, I understand that several bodies have already presented to it evidence on margarine quotas and their abolition. Last week the dairy industry put forward a case opposing the abolition of margarine quotas and several margarine manufacturers have also presented evidence, although I have no idea what that evidence comprised. There would appear to be a complete lack of understanding between the South Australian Government and the Commonwealth Government if we are to abolish margarine quotas before being able to consider the recommendations of the Commonwealth inquiry.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The South Australian Government's attitude to this matter has been made perfectly clear and, if someone else wants to hold an inquiry into the dairying industry which may or may not have relevance to the attitude of the South Australian Government, I cannot say that that should delay or defer implementation of our own decision to abolish margarine quotas. I do not think the majority of members on either side of this House has been prepared for some considerable time to stand up and defend the traditional restrictions imposed on the production of margarine. That kind of protection should not be given any industry if protection is needed, and I hope that Sir John Crawford, in conducting this inquiry, will take the view that, if protection is necessary, it should not be of the kind that would prevent the production of something else, particularly where parts of that production are judged to be medically necessary in certain circumstances. I have not heard of this inquiry—

Mr. Dean Brown: I doubt whether the Minister of Agriculture has, either.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I realise that the member for Davenport is a considerable expert on these matters, that he has a great knowledge which he is able to display by reading various documents and extracts in this House, and that his contributions are always greatly appreciated. I will inquire how soon Sir John Crawford expects to make his report. Clearly, if the report is not expected to be presented to the Commonwealth Government for about 18 months, those in the community who favour the abolition of margarine quotas could be excused for thinking that to defer a decision on that matter until the presentation of

the report would be a pretty inexcusable tactic to avoid taking a decision that ought to be taken.

#### MOUNT BARKER HOUSES

Mr. McANANEY: Will the Minister of Development and Mines, as Minister in charge of housing, ascertain what is causing delays to the completion of Housing Trust houses at Mount Barker and Woodside? Many houses are under construction in these areas, but progress on the work is extremely slow. I understand that building materials are now in ample supply and that about 100 people in Mount Barker who could be doing work of this kind are unemployed. I also understand that the Minister has obtained finance from the Commonwealth Government. Therefore, I ask him what is the cause of the delay and when it is expected that the group of partly completed houses, some of which are almost fully completed, will be made available.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: I will get a report for the honourable member.

#### NATURAL GAS

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Will the Premier say whether the Government has any information about the revised estimate of natural gas reserves at Palm Valley, in the Northern Territory, and, if it has that information, whether the revised estimate will have any effect on the Redcliff project? My attention has been drawn to a report in the *Melbourne Age* this morning, part of which states:

Natural gas reserves at Palm Valley are being revised downward, possibly by as much as half. Official reserves a year ago were put by the Bureau of Mineral Resources at 1.9 trillion (million million) cu.ft. for the Palm Valley and Mereenie field. They are now thought to be about 1 trillion cu.ft.

Another part of the report states:

The expected downgrading brings into question all the economies of extending the Commonwealth Government's Gidgealpa-Sydney gas pipeline 500 miles westwards to Palm Valley.

I understand that this link is one of the important factors being considered in regard to the Redcliff project, and, irrespective of the estimates that Mr. Connor has made (last July, I understand from the report) that there was definitely between 7 trillion and 8 trillion cu.ft. of gas at Palm Valley, this reduction in the official estimate of reserves at Palm Valley is a serious matter.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Although I have seen no such estimate, I do not know how it could have been made, given the fact that there has not been a stepping out of drilling work of any significance at this stage in the Mereenie and Palm Valley field. How anyone can, on the basis of work done so far, make a reliable downgrading of estimates of gas contained in that field is beyond me.

#### COUNCIL ROAD GRANTS

Mr. GUNN: Will the Minister of Local Government state clearly why his department has reduced grants to councils on Eyre Peninsula by over \$200 000 in the current financial year? In the allocations that councils received from the Highways Department, the only drastic reductions were in allocations to councils on Eyre Peninsula, and many of those councils are concerned about the future viability of their roadmaking plant. It seems that the Government has discriminated against Eyre Peninsula, because other parts of South Australia have not been treated similarly.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: When this matter has been raised previously, I have said that the total amount made available to councils in South Australia in this financial

year was slightly more than the amount that councils had spent in the previous financial year. That is a statement of fact, and the reason why there was not the increase that we would have liked to apply was that a reduced total amount was available in the Highways Fund, having regard to the amount of work that could be produced from a given sum of money. In other words, after considering the effect of inflation on money, less work effort will be produced with the amount available this year than was produced last year. That is borne out by the fact that the Commonwealth grant last year was \$31 000 000 and the same amount has been granted this year (in monetary terms, that amount is available again), but in terms of work output there is a reduction of 15 per cent of possibly 17½ per cent, because of the erosion of values. The matter is not one of any discrimination against the area to which the honourable member has referred.

I have with me the lists of grants for this year but, unfortunately, I have not the figures for last year, so I cannot make the comparison that perhaps should be made. However, in determining the grants to various councils, many factors are considered, not the least being needs, and the needs of one area are weighed against those of another, final decisions being made on recommendations forwarded to me on the basis of where the most good can be done for the most people. Presumably, as a result of the application of that formula, the grants to councils in the West Coast area have been less than the grants were last year, but the allocation has been made on the basis I have explained. There is no question of discrimination.

The other point that I want to make again (and I think it important to go on making it) is that, although I accept as a desirable and even essential action the provision of funds by way of grant from the Highways Department to help councils provide roads of reasonable standard in their areas, bearing in mind the overall need for major road routes, bus routes, and similar things, I still strongly hold the view that councils should be able to stand fairly and squarely on their own two feet and not have to rely on hand-outs by way of grants or by way of debit order work from the Highways Department. I consider that local government should be so structured economically that it can withstand these ups and downs that will occur from time to time.

#### HOUSING FINANCE

Mr. EVANS: Will the Minister of Development and Mines, as Minister in charge of housing, say whether South Australia's housing situation is the worst in Australia or whether this State is getting a shabby deal from the Commonwealth Government? A report in today's *Advertiser* states that the Commonwealth Minister for Housing (Mr. Johnson) has told the member for Boothby in the Commonwealth Parliament (Mr. McLeay) that five out of six States received everything they had asked for at the conference of State and Commonwealth Ministers in charge of Housing. Mr. Johnson said that only one State had not received all that it had asked for. The Minister of Development and Mines said recently that he was disappointed that South Australia had not received the \$5 400 000 that it had requested in relation to housing for people whose incomes were above the means test limit. He said he was also disappointed that South Australia had not received \$3 000 000 to offset over-spending that had taken place last year in the public sector in providing for housing, and that he was disappointed that the State had not received \$1 000 000 required to purchase existing houses in the

State. Therefore, one of two things is possible: either the housing situation is bad, or we are receiving a shabby deal from the Commonwealth Government. From the report of what the Commonwealth Minister has said, it appears that the other States are satisfied with what they have received. That Minister has said that only one State (and that must be South Australia, in view of what our Minister says) has not received what it has asked for. What is the true position?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: No State came away satisfied. I should make clear that Mr. Johnson's statement, as reported (and I have not yet seen the report), must relate to home builders account money, because no State got what it asked for by way of money for housing commissions or trusts. Regarding money disbursed through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement to the home builders account, it is true that technically every State, except New South Wales, got the money it had requested. I say "technically", because we had made an additional request for money outside the present conditions of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for the home builders account for disbursement to people with incomes marginally above the means tests. That request was not met.

However, the States have been informed about the new housing corporation that the Commonwealth Government is setting up. It was indicated to us that the initial work of this corporation would be to make loan money available to individuals in the very area in relation to which we had requested \$5 400 000 over and above the \$3 740 000 that we had requested and received. If, in fact, we can get that sum at an intermediate interest rate (above what the State Bank charges at present on new loans, but below what a person has to pay if he goes to a building society) and if it can be made available to the people of South Australia through the Australian Housing Corporation, rather than through the State Bank as we had intended had our request been met, that will satisfy us. That still means that the money is going into housing in the area in which it is needed. In fact, I am continuing my negotiations with Mr. Johnson on that basis.

I make clear that the statement about the States, with the exception of New South Wales, getting all they have asked for is technically correct only if we are referring to money disbursed under the present conditions of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and only if we confine our attention to the home builders account. Regarding the housing commissions and trusts, a total of \$25 000 000 was granted to the States. It will be distributed on the same basis as the original sums were distributed in June this year. Based on that, my calculation is that we will finish up receiving \$3 218 000, which means that, on a per capita basis, we have done fairly well with regard to the trust.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Can the Minister say whether the Government proposes that the Housing Trust should remain a large builder of houses and, if so, what action does the Government intend to take to this end? The number of houses built by the trust has continuously declined. I have here a table that shows that in 1953 the trust completed 4 126 houses, whereas this year (up to June 30) the trust has completed only 1 339 houses, at a time when the shortage of houses is worse than it has ever been. I listened with some attention to the reply given by the Minister a few minutes ago to the previous question, and believe that he was being rather defensive and appeared to adopt an optimistic air. However, the figures on completions and the money available to the trust lead one to believe that the trust is being phased

out in some way. In putting the question to the Minister, I ask him what on earth the Government is going to do about the situation.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The Government sees the trust continuing to play the role it has always played. I do not know that I can add much to the reply I gave the member for Fisher when he asked a similar question about this time last week. However, as a result of my involvement in the Commonwealth-State Housing Ministers' Conference at the end of last week and of discussions I have had with the National Capital Development Commission only yesterday, it is obvious that the rest of Australia has not been immune to the sorts of problem we have experienced in public housing during the past 12 months; in fact, much the same sort of constraint has continued to operate on us. N.C.D.C. figures, as a percentage, relating to the turnover in public housing for last year, are similar to our own, although they may be marginally better. I would make the point, however, that I believe we are seeing the same sort of pattern in South Australia that the other States are seeing; that is to say, although completions are still down on what they were this time last year (reflecting the general downturn in the last financial year when these houses were begun), start-ups are significantly above the figures for the same period last year. This is a figure that I hope we will be able to maintain.

Another point I could have made in relation to the earlier question, which is not irrelevant to the question asked by the member for Mitcham, is that State Ministers were given a clear message by the Commonwealth Minister that we should continue to build at the rate we have established. That is to say that, in this financial year, even though, for example, we did not receive all the money for which we asked for the South Australian Housing Trust, we should not allow this to operate as a constraint, because there is a clear understanding that we shall be repeating last Friday's exercise in March for the final quarter of this financial year. In other words, the money we were given on Friday is not the last dip in the bucket for this financial year and, hopefully, there will be a further allocation if we can demonstrate our ability to spend it.

### RABBITS

Mr. DUNCAN: Will the Minister of Education ask the Minister of Agriculture to have the Agriculture Department urgently investigate and report on the drastic increase that appears to be occurring in the South Australian rabbit population? Last weekend, while I was in the Yunta-Olary pastoral area in the north-east of South Australia, many local people told me that the rabbit plague this year was the worst in living memory. People in the area are concerned, for the plague poses a serious threat to pasture. Whilst we were there, three or four times during the evening we ran down rabbits on the road, because they were so thick. The excellent season has led to a situation in which the rabbit population has increased rapidly, and people in the area say there will possibly be an adverse effect on future seasons. If action is not taken to solve the problem, pastoral areas in that part of the State will be seriously affected and may not recover from this rabbit plague.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I realise that the honourable member's question is part of a deep dark plot to enable the member for Frome to get in more than one question during Question Time. However, I hope that if this happens again, the member for Frome will coach the honourable member a little in his pronunciation. As this matter is serious, obviously the Agriculture Department will

be concerned about it. I will get a report and bring it down for the honourable member as soon as possible.

### SHACKS

Mr. RUSSACK: Will the Minister of Education ask the Minister of Lands when the full report and recommendations of the shack review committee will be completed? Will the report be made available to members of this House? Several weeks ago the committee issued an interim statement. On behalf of many constituents, I should like to know when the report will be available.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I will take up the matter with my colleague and bring down a reply for the honourable member as soon as possible.

### ROAD ACCIDENTS

Mr. ALLEN: Can the Minister of Transport say whether there are available any figures from which it is possible to determine how many drivers from the metropolitan area and how many from the country are involved in accidents in country areas? Although I have tried to obtain this information (whether it is available I do not know), I have not been able to get it. My question is prompted by the following report, in relation to accidents in country areas, which appears in last Sunday's *Sunday Mail*:

On Friday, the Chairman of the Road Safety Council of South Australia (Mr. B. H. Boykett) said that statistics showed six people could die, with another 229 being injured, over the three-day weekend.

I think that forecast was fairly accurate. The report continues:

South Australia's road toll is already 61 higher than it was on the Labor Day holiday in 1973 ... Of the 273 fatal road accidents in South Australia to September 30, 60 per cent, or 165 accidents, were on country roads. According to Mr. Boykett, 118 of these involved only one vehicle. "In other words, the driver lost control and rolled over or hit a fixed object," Mr. Boykett said.

These figures reveal that of 165 deaths that have occurred in country areas, 118 occurred in accidents in which only one vehicle was involved, thus showing that most accidents are caused by bad driving. On Sunday I visited Flinders Range, and seeing some exhibitions of driving in that area makes one's hair stand on end. The driver of a motor car parked his vehicle within 30 m of the top of a crest. A car came over the hill but, because the convoy was not following over the crest, he reversed up the hill to see where it was, and I had to swing onto the grass on one side of the road. There could have been a bad accident. I am sure that people behave in this way because they lack the necessary driving experience, and it is considered by many people that something must be done to educate people on how to drive in country areas.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The Road Traffic Board is now compiling statistics on the road problem. I had the 1973 figures with me a week or so ago when the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition was being debated, but these details have now been returned to my office. As far as I am aware, the statistics sought by the honourable member showing the categories of home location of drivers are not contained in that report. However, I will check and, if the details are not contained therein, I will find out whether that information is available from the computer; if it is, I shall be pleased to obtain it in relation to fatal accidents. If this information is to have any value, however, we must consider not only fatal accidents but also the whole problem of accidents and, if we can do anything to reduce the shocking carnage on our roads, I shall be only too pleased to do it.

**SICK FAUNA**

Mrs. BYRNE: Will the Minister of Environment and Conservation consider having his department set up a clinic for sick fauna in South Australia? When I last referred to this matter in 1971, I was told that, at that time, from a conservation aspect it was not warranted because other important conservation projects were required, although from a humanitarian point of view it was most desirable. People who found injured native animals and birds were asked to care for them until they were well enough to be released. Having only limited facilities, the department could only undertake the care of rare and threatened species. I remind the Minister that native animals, birds, and reptiles continue to be injured on the roads and in other ways. I witnessed some of these incidents during the weekend when driving in country areas, and perhaps other members have seen the same things. Some native animals also become ill through natural causes, and many could be saved if given proper attention, although this is something that most people, however well meaning, cannot provide. At present many animals suffer and die unnecessarily, and this situation should be avoided, both from a conservation and a humanitarian point of view.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Appreciating the honourable member's concern for injured birds and animals, I shall be pleased to have another discussion with the National Parks and Wildlife Service on this aspect. However, details of the reply to which the honourable member referred would still, I suspect, apply, because a tremendous amount of work must be done by a limited number of staff in this service in caring for a considerable range of wild life. Therefore, the sort of service to which the honourable member refers could well take up much of the time of the staff, and I doubt whether we can solve this problem. I will re-examine the matter following the honourable member's request.

**NORTHERN ROADS**

Mr. VENNING: Is the Minister of Transport aware how roads throughout the State have deteriorated, mainly because of the wet winter we have experienced and the inability of present methods of road construction and reconstruction to cope with the present situation? During the holiday weekend, whilst travelling in the northern part of the State, I was amazed to see how roads had deteriorated, mainly, I think, because of the wet winter we have experienced and also because of the inability of repair gangs to work in wet weather. Is the Minister aware of the present situation in the deterioration of roads in the northern part of the State?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Yes.

**SPEAKER'S GALLERY**

Mr. BOUNDY: I ask you a question, Mr. Speaker, in connection with your responsibility for the affairs of this Chamber. Will you use your good offices to ensure that amplifiers in the Speaker's Gallery operate satisfactorily? Visitors, including constituents of mine who have visited the Chamber, have been disappointed because of the ineffectiveness and even the complete failure of the amplification system in the Speaker's Gallery, as they have been unable to follow the deliberations of this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: First, I am not responsible for the volume of the voices of individual members: that is something that they must determine themselves. In reply to the honourable member's question, the matter will be rectified, I hope, during the recess, after the House adjourns before Christmas. For a considerable time the Public Buildings

Department and its contractors have done the initial work necessary to install a new amplification system in the House of Assembly and in its precincts. Wires have been installed, and it is hoped that the necessary equipment to finish the job will be operating before the House returns, possibly in January or February next year, and recommences sitting after the adjournment. The work is well advanced but, as honourable members will realise, this job cannot be done whilst the House is in session: it is a major job that must be done partly during the session and completed when the House is not sitting.

**WEST LAKES FLOODING**

Dr. EASTICK: Is the Minister of Education, as Acting Minister of Marine, aware that a major sand bank at West Lakes has broken down resulting in major flooding back to Old Port Road, and that it has been estimated that it will cost about \$500 000 to repair the damage that has followed from this flooding? This matter, which has been reported to me during Question Time this afternoon, must concern all members. Is the Minister aware of any difficulties in that area?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No, I am not. If something has occurred, no doubt I will receive a report later today, but I should be very much surprised if an event had occurred in the past few hours that would enable me to give, at this stage, a reliable estimate of the possible cost that might be involved.

**ENERGY**

Mr. COUMBE: Can the Minister of Development and Mines say whether a committee has been set up by the South Australian Government to investigate the principles of conserving South Australia's energy supplies for future use, not only the more economical use and saving of conventional energy supplies (including fossil fuels) but also the possible use of solar energy? Further, are any investigations currently taking place in the fields to which I have referred and, if they are not, will the Minister consider establishing such an investigation, apart from the research now being conducted at Flinders University?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Members might recall that some time ago the Government set up a committee to undertake a State energy study. That body has met over many months and I have had the benefit of the release of some information from what will shortly be a draft report. It was within the terms of reference of that committee to consider the matter raised by the honourable member. I am not in a position now to say what the final report on the matter will contain; however, I consider that the report will be as significant in the energy field as was the report, brought down two years ago by Professor Jordan, on the South Australian environment.

*At 3.6 p.m., the bells having been rung:*

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

**SEX DISCRIMINATION BILL**

The Hon. D. H. McKEE (Minister of Labour and Industry) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report received.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): I move:

That the report be noted.

The Bill has, since its introduction into the House last year on August 28, traversed a fairly protracted course. It was referred to a Select Committee, as members know, which met on 19 occasions. Those 19 meetings give no

indication at all of the work that has been done by individual members of the committee in discussing various features of discrimination on the grounds of sex. These discussions have taken place with other members of the community, between committee members themselves, and with other members of Parliament. Indeed, the 19 meetings could simply be said to be the tip of the iceberg.

At the outset, I should say that I am more than grateful for the tremendous co-operation, help and enthusiasm that has been shown by members of the Select Committee. I refer, of course, to the members for Tea Tree Gully, Elizabeth, and Glenelg, and the Minister of Labour and Industry, who chaired the committee. The spirit in which they received the evidence that was presented was admirable, and was only what I would expect from them. The Minister was a sensitive Chairman, although on occasions I suspected he was not always entirely in sympathy with the main objects of the Bill.

I introduced the Bill out of a deep conviction that something must be done to remedy the situation applying to women in the community. The main features of the Bill are available to members in the report as it is printed. Those main features were to prohibit discrimination against any individual, whether male or female, in employment, training for employment and in the provision of financial services and credit; and it provided for the establishment of a Sex Discrimination Board empowered to listen to complaints of discrimination and to negotiate and act if the complaints were found to be justified. If members study the broad headings on page 1 of the report, they will see that the committee gave special consideration to the following matters: (a) To what extent does discrimination on the grounds of sex exist in our community? (b) What action has been, or is being, taken to overcome such discrimination? (c) To what extent does the Bill achieve its aim of prohibiting discrimination?

One of the other most important features of the Bill is the provision that injured parties may go to the board and persuade it that they have been discriminated against. Those people who had a good case could, through the board, take action in a court for damages. The committee members and the witnesses who appeared before it considered that this was a good course to follow. It was not a unanimously held view, but it was held fairly constantly throughout the proceedings. The principle was that the person who had been discriminated against should receive damages in respect of that act of discrimination, rather than that any action be taken in a criminal court and penal sanctions imposed. In other words, it is insufficient that the person discriminated against should have the discrimination removed and that the Crown should thereby receive a fine; it is more important that the person discriminated against receive some recompense.

I am grateful to the witnesses who took the time and trouble to appear before the committee and to the people who sent in submissions. Their evidence was invaluable and built up a tremendous picture of the current community attitude toward women and women's place in the community. However, it was not always a pleasant picture because, undoubtedly, discrimination against women is widespread, and it seems to vary somewhat. Witnesses who said they had been discriminated against alleged that discrimination was widespread. Witnesses who had allegedly been discriminating said that discrimination was not really all that serious. It depended on the side of the fence one was on. However, one thing became clear: apparently, a great change has taken place in the attitude of the community over the last year or so. Apparently,

discrimination, if it has not been entirely wiped out, occurs much less now. Whether that is simply the result of this Bill being introduced or whether it is merely coincidental, I do not know. However, if this result stems from the Bill, I am indeed pleased that it has been on the Notice Paper all this time and that perhaps it has done some good, just by being there. I submit, nevertheless, that it will do far more good when it is on the Statute Book.

The Select Committee's report goes at length into actions taken to overcome discrimination. I am sure that members of the public, particularly concerned members of the public, will be more than pleased to read about these actions. I refer to page 5 of the committee's report and summarise the headings as follows: (1) the ratification by the Australian Government, with the agreement of all State Governments, of the I.L.O. Convention No. 111; (2) the establishment by the Australian Government of the national and State committees on discrimination and employment and occupation; (3) the removal of certain discriminatory provisions from this Parliament's legislation (although that is hard to define at times); (4) the passing of section 78 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1972, and the decision of December, 1972, of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission regarding equal pay for the sexes (and there has been another decision, which was not available to the committee at that time but which has been made recently by the Supreme Court); (5) the decision of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission on May 2, 1974, to extend the minimum wage to adult females; and (6) action taken in the South Australian Public Service.

I suppose that inevitably a report prepared by the Chairman of a committee such as ours, who is an excellent Minister of Labour and Industry, must be oriented toward employment in the industrial field, and that is the case in this instance. Inasmuch as these measures have been taken, I believe that the situation regarding discrimination in employment is much better than it was. However, I believe that many women in our community do not accept that it is better than it was but still believe they are discriminated against, not occasionally but constantly. I believe that, because of these people, a Sex Discrimination Board should be established, because it can do nothing but good as a continuing presence and reminder to anyone, any department, or any industry that discrimination will not be countenanced. I cannot say how much I want to see the board established as soon as possible.

The Commonwealth-State Committee on Discrimination in Employment, we found, had no authority other than to hear complaints of discrimination. Those people who believed that a body set up with no authority or statutory power would be adequate to do the job have now been convinced that, unless any such committee or board has statutory authority, it is of no real lasting value. I am sure that it could help, but it would be of no lasting value. The point was made frequently by many witnesses before the committee that women are mostly their own worst enemy and that they will not apply for a job if they do not believe they have a chance of getting it. We come back to the old generations of role playing and conditioning that put women in our community in that frame of mind. This is a well-ingrained and firmly held opinion on the part of many women in our community. They constantly sell themselves short, and they must be helped as much as possible to overcome this hang-up that they have inherited from past generations.

I believe that the position in schools is now much improved. Mr. Steinle, from the Education Department, appeared as a witness. He told us that opportunities for



various educational courses are much improved now, and pointed out that discrimination was less the department's fault than that of the parents. As he, or someone else, pointed out, it was not likely to be highly regarded if a boy were to go home to his father and tell him that he had enrolled to attend a needlework course. I cannot see any objection to that, but I think the conditioning of the parents has much to do with the conditioning of children. In our education system there is a need for much wider education in this sphere. We heard much evidence that women were discriminated against in the granting of credit. We were told of one case where a woman on an extremely good income with an extremely good position asked a bank for a loan. She was refused and told she would not get a loan unless she could provide a guarantor. She went to one of her colleagues who, holding a similar position, was equally well off, and submitted her name; and she was told that that would not do either. She then put forward the name of her pensioner father with not many assets, and that was accepted. In other words, the bank would prefer to accept the guarantee of a male with few assets rather than the guarantee of a female with adequate and reasonable assets.

Mr. Becker: I find that hard to accept.

Dr. TONKIN: The member for Hanson will be pleased when he reads the report, because I think an institution with which he was once concerned has been a leader in the sphere of equal rights in the granting of credit facilities to women, and I congratulate that institution. Nevertheless, it seems to me that much has been accomplished during the last 12 months, either coincidentally with or as a result of the introduction of this Bill, but we have progressed only part of the way. The report states:

Views were expressed that in certain types of employment the failure to secure positions more often than not results from the fact that only a small proportion of females possess the necessary qualifications or experience.

If that is the case the remedy is very much a long-term matter. The report further states:

In fact it was stated that equality of opportunity is unreal at the present time in many occupations because so many women have not had the opportunity to be trained or to obtain experience that men have had for many generations.

I think that is a fair comment. The following statement appears on page 3 of the report:

It was suggested by other witnesses that some employers are reluctant to promote women to executive positions, or some trade unions to appoint women to management committees, because it is claimed that the presence of women at meetings or other gatherings might inhibit discussion.

I think the suggestion was made quite openly that bad language might be used and that women would therefore be offended. It was also suggested that women executives would not be appropriate as regards a company weekend activity. I think that is a peculiar point of view. Nevertheless, these views were stated seriously, albeit perhaps unconsciously and without any real understanding of what those statements meant. The report also states:

Conditioning during job recruitment for females is also a factor that limits women's opportunities for advancement within their particular spheres of employment. For example, girls employed at the age of 17 years in many offices are employed as ledger machinists or stenographers or clerks and do not have the opportunity to train for more senior positions; the attitude being that they will probably only be employed with the office for a few years before marriage and child-bearing. We were told that in banks women are eligible to sit for Bankers' Institute examinations, but few do so.

Mr. Bowes (Secretary for Labour and Industry) was one person who believed that no further legislation was necessary. He believed the situation had been dealt with adequately by the various State Acts and by the national committee established by the Australian Government to investigate discrimination in employment and occupation. He was in favour only of amending existing industrial legislation—

Mr. Dean Brown: You disagree with that opinion?

Dr. TONKIN: I do not agree with it at all, and neither did the committee, which made a point of saying that it did not agree with it. On financial matters the report states:

The Australian Finance Conference submitted a statement on "The Status of Women" in which the conference admitted that "there is . . . discriminatory practice against women which is based on the more traditional ideas of the role and place of women in society". However, it was further stated to us that "if such discrimination does exist it would appear to be in the minority in the finance industry".

That is not according to my experiences. Some women said in evidence to the committee that they were refused loans or mortgages, and I have gone into that already. As far as we can ascertain, it is no longer the policy of any lending institution to restrict the granting of credit purely on the basis of the sex of the applicant, and decisions on the granting of credit are now made on a rational basis, depending on the ability of the applicant to service the credit and to repay the loan. Under the heading, "To what extent does the Bill achieve its aim of prohibiting discrimination?" the report states that, with the one exception I have already noted, witnesses expressed general agreement that further measures were required, and there was general agreement among most witnesses concerning the need for the establishment of a Sex Discrimination Board as proposed in the Bill.

Evidence given by the Crown Solicitor was very helpful and it expressed the view that there were sufficient safeguards in the Bill to prevent it from conflicting with the power of the State Industrial Commission to include in awards matters relating to the question whether persons of either sex should be employed in any industry. He said that Commonwealth awards would override the provisions of the Bill. He said that he could see no great danger in providing an alternative remedy to penalties already existing under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and that in his opinion the proposed tort remedy (the right to sue for damages in respect of any discriminatory act) would be an effective way of dealing with the situation. On balance, he believed this would be better than putting in penal sanctions. By and large I agree with every single item in the report, except one, and that is the recommendation in the last paragraph. Having said that the committee supports the principles embodied in the Bill, that the tort remedy should be applied, and that a Sex Discrimination Board should be able to take action in this way, the report concludes:

Although the committee supports the principles embodied in the Bill, its implementation would involve a financial commitment by the Government. Therefore the committee recognises that a sex discrimination board can only be established by a Government Bill and recommends that the Government should introduce a Bill to give effect to the views expressed in this report and that the present Bill should not be proceeded with.

I was disturbed when I first saw the general terms of the last recommendation. In the debate before the Bill went to the Select Committee, I said:

However, I hope most sincerely that this will not be a way of burying this Bill or of avoiding the issues involved

in it. The women of the community in South Australia have, by their communications with me, strongly supported the items contained in the Bill.

I was disturbed even further when I remembered the attitude of the Minister and the Secretary which, as I have said, was not always in full accord with the objects of this Bill. Because the Secretary believed that this Bill was not necessary, I suspect that the Minister also might think that it is not necessary. I may be wrong in saying that.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: You are.

Dr. TONKIN: I look forward to hearing the Minister speak. If I may say so, we have rather a contradiction in terms. We agree that the Bill is good, that the legislation should be brought in, and that it will benefit the people of South Australia (not only women), and then we say we should not proceed with the measure as a private member's Bill. I admit that I have not much of a grasp on the Bill, but I have some grasp on it.

Mr. Wells: You'd be concerned about the credit, though.

Dr. TONKIN: I am not concerned about the credit. The Government is being small-minded, and that does it little credit.

Mr. Mathwin: The Government, or the Minister?

Dr. TONKIN: Let us be fair: I think it is the Government that is being small-minded. I am sure that the members for Tea Tree Gully and Elizabeth really want this measure to go forward as quickly as possible. In fact, we all want it to go forward, and we should be allowed to achieve that. The remark in the last paragraph of the Select Committee's report that only the Government can introduce a separate Bill to get it in is balderdash and absolute tommy rot! When my honourable friend the member for Mallee introduced a private member's Bill to establish the Public Accounts Committee, the Government made satisfactory financial arrangements about giving an instruction to the Committee contingently. A message was received from the Governor informing the House of an appropriation, and the Bill proceeded quickly. I consider that this Bill could be proceeded with quickly, too. Yesterday afternoon I waited for contingent notice of motion to be given, but it was not given. I do not want the credit for this Bill: it will be enough for me if the legislation gets on the Statute Book, and I want to make sure that that happens.

Mr. Millhouse: Don't press credibility too far!

Dr. TONKIN: I am not pressing credibility at all. I have felt as I have stated until about 1.55 this afternoon, when the Minister approached me and told me that discussions had taken place. I am not sure what those discussions were, and I do not know who had them, or anything else. I understand now that the Premier will speak on this matter, but I am not sure whether to welcome this. If he gives a clear assurance that the Government will proceed with this Bill as quickly as possible, certainly by the time this session ends, I will be grateful, as will many other people in South Australia. I will wait for that assurance, which must be given before I let go what tenuous hold I have on the Bill. Paragraph 25 of the Select Committee report states:

It appears to the committee that many women still see their major roles as wives, mothers and key members of a family. But it believes that those women who choose, or who are obliged through force of circumstances, to enter the work force, or who seek credit or other services on their own behalf, should have equal access to opportunities for education and training, promotion and advancement in employment, and to credit and other services, without fear of discrimination by reason of their sex.

That is the essence of the report and the basis on which any action must be taken. It is disgraceful that action

has not been taken before now, and I only hope that the last-minute notice given to me that the Premier desires to speak in this debate means that the Government will act on this matter as quickly as possible.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I appreciate the sincerity and enthusiasm of the member for Bragg. I do express slight surprise at the heat of the last part of his remarks, because I had told him the nature of what I would say this afternoon. I shall be brief in my remarks. First, the Government is in accord with the principles of this proposal. Indeed, that it is so in accord is quite evident from the evidence given before the Select Committee of actions that the Government has taken already in this area. Those actions have not been slight; they have been considerable.

The position regarding this Bill is that, if it is to have effect, there must be an appropriation in relation to it and a Governor's message, and the appropriation clause has not been drafted yet, nor has Cabinet had an opportunity to examine the final report in detail. In fact, most of us have seen the report only today. It is necessary for Cabinet to examine the report and prepare a measure, either giving effect to the principles of the report and including an appropriation, or seeing to it by other appropriate means that the measure is proceeded with. It is necessary for us to have time to do that, but I assure the honourable member and the House that the Government intends that the measure should proceed this session. If it is necessary that it should proceed without the honourable member's tenuous hold (as he has expressed it), on the matter, I assure him that Government time will be made available during the session to complete it. I point out to the honourable member that two other matters mean that the legislation really could not proceed today. First, the committee has recommended an amendment, and that has not yet been drafted. That amendment is dealt with in paragraph 28 of the committee's report.

In addition, last week the Full Court gave a judgment on equal pay markedly affecting the provisions that this House previously has sought to make for women in this State. It is necessary for us urgently to take legislative action to rectify that situation. I consider that that should be done either in, or conjointly with, the measure on sex discrimination. I give that assurance to the honourable member and the House. I appreciate the valuable work of this committee, and I believe that we in South Australia will get jointly from this measure and the initiatives of the member for Bragg, for which I pay him full credit, a measure that again will be a lead to the rest of Australia.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I support the Bill, and congratulate the member for Bragg on introducing it. I congratulate, too, other members of the Select Committee (the members for Tea Tree Gully, Elizabeth, and Bragg, and the Minister of Labour and Industry), who worked so hard. As a member of the committee, I can say that the work, although hard, was most interesting; we learnt much. Unless one has contact with people who are concerned about matters such as these, one does not realise how bad the situation really is. When people talk about sex discrimination, one is inclined to brush it off. However, the witnesses who appeared before this committee amply justified their cause. What they said certainly bore out the need for this type of legislation, a need to which the member for Bragg referred when he originally introduced the Bill.

In bringing in the Bill, the member for Bragg was not influenced at all by any political motivation; rather, he

acted on personal experience. I understand that, at an early age, he lost his father and that his mother and he had to get along as best they could over the years. From personal experience, he saw a problem in the community in relation to sex discrimination. On the eve of the Bill's first presentation into Parliament, the member for Bragg's mother was taken to hospital. On the way, she told the honourable member that she hoped he would go ahead with introducing the Bill, because of its importance to South Australia, no matter what happened. Unfortunately, the honourable member's mother died that evening. In accordance with her wishes, he introduced the Bill the following day. I commend him for his efforts in bringing it forward. The committee heard evidence from 24 witnesses and received 27 written submissions; that is a good deal of work. On page 1, paragraph 3 of the committee's report states:

The committee sought information regarding discrimination in (a) employment, (b) training and education, (c) the provision of finance from banks and similar bodies; also (d) the need to establish a Sex Discrimination Board as proposed in the Bill and (e) the nature of the remedy to be provided in respect of acts of discrimination.

On page 2, paragraph 5 of the report states:

The committee is satisfied from the evidence that discrimination exists—

we were unanimous on that—

and that it is not necessarily limited to females, but finds it difficult to determine accurately how widespread that discrimination is.

The next paragraph refers to the evidence of Mr. Johnston, Q.C., who placed much importance on the fact that women were either totally debarred from certain training or, if not totally debarred, at least in practice were fairly well cut out of access to certain training. Strong representations were made about the position of women journalists, a written representation being made by the Women Journalists Club, which stated that there was a strong weighting in favour of male cadets in this field. Female cadets are given jobs such as reporting the local garden party or the meeting of the bridge club. Some people think that such work suits the ability of females, rather than a more meaty job that carries with it more responsibility, enabling a reporter to gain experience in the trade. It is interesting to note that, during the last 10 years, the proportion of females in professions and other occupations is about the same as it has been in the past.

The committee was told that discrimination still exists in education. However, I believe that this trend seems to be disappearing. There is probably now more flexibility in relation to the courses that girls can take. In addition, the position with regard to the staffing of schools is improving for female teachers, although it is not nearly as satisfactory as it should be. Whether we consider primary, high or infants schools, few females occupy the head position. There is no doubt at all that the situation at our two universities points to discrimination. How many professors are women? How many women occupy executive positions? Admittedly, there are some female lecturers. The submission by the Education Department states that the imbalance between the numbers of women and men in senior positions in education is not peculiar to this country. However, that is nothing for us to be proud of.

Recent investigations in England indicate that, of 44 Vice-Chancellors in British universities, none is a woman. Of 42 heads of university departments, institutes, and schools of education, none is a woman. Not one woman is included among the 44 Registrars of universities in Great Britain. Of 44 principals of colleges of agriculture in England

and Wales, none is a woman. Of 28 polytechnics principals in England and Wales, none is a woman. Of 24 medical schools in England and Wales, only one has a woman principal, and of the 21 members of the University Grants Committee (including the Chairman), two only are women. That describes the situation in the United Kingdom, but I suggest that we are no better in this State. From the evidence given to the committee there is no doubt of the existence of discrimination within our universities. It could be argued that women might not be able to obtain the positions anyway, but they are not encouraged to seek them, and it is suggested to them that they try other avenues that would be more suitable.

Referring to another aspect of the report, discrimination is shown against women trying to obtain financial assistance. My colleague the member for Bragg related an instance in which a woman, with satisfactory employment, wanted a loan, but was told that, unless she could obtain a male guarantor, she could not be granted the loan. She asked her pensioner father to help her, and received this financial help. How ridiculous that situation is! It was claimed that the main reason for refusing financial aid was the lack of ability to repay the loan. How is it known that the male guarantor will be able to guarantee repayment, when his financial circumstances are not given reasonable consideration?

Another aspect discussed by the committee was the position of females wishing to apply for apprenticeship to a trade. It would be interesting to ascertain how many woman apprentices are employed in the building or printing trades, or any other trade. I was disappointed, because no trade union representative gave evidence before the committee. The Amalgamated Metal Workers Union Women's Committee gave evidence, but I had hoped that other unions would submit evidence. If equal pay and other working conditions for females were to be considered, people should have been interested enough to provide evidence to the committee. The usual excuse for the non-employment of women in trades is that toilet and other personal facilities have to be duplicated. I understand that this was a problem when women were seeking employment as bus drivers and conductors. Although this excuse has often been used, it seems to have little validity. Opposition to women has also been shown in the racing industry. Last year a horse race was held in which women jockeys participated. Why they were called "jockettes" I do not know, because to me that means something different from a woman jockey.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What do you think they are?

Mr. MATHWIN: They are not ladies riding horses. Usually, lady jockeys are not allowed to ride in the same race as male jockeys. Also, when I recently visited Morphettville Racecourse, men seemed to be located in one box with no women present, and men and women had separate refreshment bars. This is a ridiculous situation. If one visits the racecourse with one's wife or another person whom one may like, it would be proper to remain with her all the afternoon, and that should be done. But it seems that men and women are separated for most of the activities at this racecourse. The racing industry seems to be one of the last bastions of male domination.

A witness before the committee was asked in which employment women should not be able to work, and the reply was that they should be able to work anywhere. I asked about a woman being a toilet attendant and the reply was, "Why not?" If a woman wants to be a toilet attendant in a male toilet, she should be able to be employed as such, if that is what she wants, and, if a man wishes to be an attendant in a ladies toilet, he should be

eligible for the job. I well remember this happening in Europe, particularly in Germany where women attendants in male toilets hurry you up if it is near knock-off time; they leave no stone unturned in telling you to hurry up and get out. It is an experience to hear a female attendant knock on a toilet door and say, "Hurry up, I am knocking off in five minutes."

Another area in which I believe females are not encouraged to seek elevation in their daily avocation is the banking field, where they are not encouraged to become tellers. Evidence given to the committee also suggested that women were not encouraged to take executive positions.

Mr. Harrison: You should get with the strength; the Commonwealth Bank has women tellers.

Mr. Payne: So does the A.N.Z. banking group.

Mr. MATHWIN: I accept that there are a few female tellers, but women are not encouraged to work in that field. In fact, the position is the opposite, the reason advanced being that male tellers can be sent by managers to any part of the State they wish to send them, whereas woman cannot. In the United Kingdom, however, nearly all bank tellers are female and they do an efficient job. I am surprised that more encouragement is not given by banks to women to become tellers. Women are encouraged to become comptometrists, computer operators, or typists, whereas the teller and accountant areas are left more to males; at least that is the tendency throughout the Australian banking industry, not just in Adelaide. I believe that policy is wrong, because females are efficient and could handle the job; I am not saying that because someone gave me more change than I should have received.

Each member of the committee and many of the witnesses agreed that there was a need to establish a board and that it must have power to institute proceedings. It is no use having a board that cannot do its job correctly. The only area in which the committee could not agree relates to item 30 of the report, the recommendation, which states:

Although the committee supports the principles embodied in the Bill, its implementation would involve a financial commitment by the Government. Therefore, the committee recognising that a sex discrimination board can only be established by a Government Bill, recommends that the Government should introduce a Bill to give effect to the views expressed in this report, and that the present Bill should not be proceeded with.

I was pleased to hear the Premier refer to that matter but, because this is not a money Bill, I cannot see why a board cannot be set up; after all, it would not delve deeply into the finances of the State. In fact, we would not have to go too far to find people who would volunteer to be members of the board. Over the years women have fought for their rights and for better opportunities; they have always been involved in agricultural matters as far back as the 14th century. In the United Kingdom and parts of Europe women were required to work unless they were over 60 years of age. They were employed in coal mines during the 14th century, the 60-year age limit being the only proviso. Later, women engaged in weaving and spinning wool in their own houses; the materials were brought to them by people involved in the business. These women had to look after their families as well. The same sort of thing has gone on throughout the ages, but women have always been given, so it seems, menial work to perform.

The same belief was held by many of the witnesses who came before the committee. In recent years, however, we have seen applications made for equal pay. Report No. 100 of the International Labour Organisation Convention of June, 1951, dealt with equal remuneration

for work of equal value. In 1961, 10 years later, an I.L.O. report stated that each member should, in the first stage, ensure the application of equal remuneration for equal work as between men and women workers. The same has been said time and time again. Finally, we reached the stage where the member for Bragg introduced the Bill to do something about the problem, a problem that had been by-passed for so long. I commend him for introducing the Bill in the way he did.

I believe that the work done by the committee during its investigations will be of great value. I commend the Bill to the House and am pleased to hear that the Government, through the Premier, agrees with the principles of the Bill. The Premier said that Cabinet must consider the details of the report, but he assured us that the Bill would be considered this session. With that assurance, I am happy to leave the matter and to say that I will support the Bill when the Premier brings it before the House. When the Bill was introduced by the member for Bragg it was designed to end economic loss to the State, to end the archaic use made of women, and to make them a power in the labour force in South Australia.

Mrs. BYRNE (Tea Tree Gully): I was pleased to be a member of the Select Committee, and wish to inform the House that all meetings were conducted in a harmonious atmosphere with a sincere sense of purpose. It is pleasing, too, that when a matter of such major importance is referred to a Select Committee, politics become secondary. I am convinced of the sincerity of the member for Bragg, who introduced the Bill, and of the sincerity of all of the committee. Some of the work undertaken has been outlined by the two previous speakers, and all of this work has been invaluable. As many as 19 official meetings were held and, as the member for Glenelg has just said, the committee received 27 written submissions, while 24 witnesses appeared before the committee. Probably the only criticism that could be levelled at the committee is that it took too long to bring down its report. As the member for Bragg said when moving the motion, apart from the 19 official meetings the committee held many unofficial meetings and discussions behind the scenes. This was necessary in running the committee efficiently.

Some of the examples of discrimination given to the committee appeared to be based on traditional attitudes. I hope that such attitudes will change soon, although in some respects I believe that will take longer than I would like it to take. This evidence was based on traditional attitudes rather than on any objective ground, which was the case made out by other evidence placed before the committee. Fortunately, attitudes seem to have changed for the better even over the past several years.

The committee's conclusion is that discrimination in employment exists on the grounds of sex and in the provision of credit, education and training. Many women still seem to see their major roles as wives, mothers and key members of the family, but the committee believes that those women who choose, or who are obliged through force of circumstances, to enter the work force, or who seek credit or other services on their own behalf, should have equal access to opportunities for education and training, promotion, and advancement in employment, and to credit and other services, without fear of discrimination by reason of their sex. That conclusion, which appears as paragraph 25 of the committee's report, under the heading "Conclusions", is probably one of the most important paragraphs in the report. The committee realises that much has been done by the present Government in this regard, and also by the Australian Government's setting

up the National and State Committees on Discrimination and Employment and Occupation. However, as all members know, that committee has no teeth: although it can investigate complaints, it cannot take action. Therefore, the Select Committee considers that further legislative action is necessary to remedy the current situation, in addition to the appointment of a board to consider all aspects of discrimination on the grounds of sex, whether such discrimination favours males or females.

The Australian board, appointed on a State basis, has no teeth, but the members of the Select Committee believe that the State board proposed to be established should be empowered to remedy complaints placed before it. I commend the report to all members and look forward to this matter proceeding as soon as possible. The precise explanation given to the House this afternoon by the Premier, as to why the Bill should not be proceeded with today, should be accepted by all members.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): First, I congratulate the member for Bragg on introducing the Bill and on the success it has achieved as a result of his initiative. I concur in complimentary remarks made by all speakers from both sides. This step is certainly long overdue, and no doubt we all agree to that. I also appreciate the Premier's acceptance today of the principle expounded by the member for Bragg in his Bill and the fact that the Premier is willing to make the necessary provision for the Bill and for providing an opportunity later in the session during Government time for the matter to proceed further. I was glad to hear the Premier's assurance because, when reading the committee's report, I was amazed. I had read all of the conclusions in favour of a certain decision; then I read the recommendation that went counter to it.

Knowing how these things work, and having been a member of a committee that brought down a report that went the other way (all the recommendations were against a certain result, whereas the final conclusion came down in favour of it), I can see what has happened in this case. At the same time, I am pleased at the way in which the Premier has received the report, and I hope that this matter will be resolved speedily. I believe that the outcome of the Bill, when passed as a result of the committee's findings, will be a great leap forward in this State's regard for human rights, understanding and opportunities. I believe that we have come a long way since the old Victorian days when votes for women were introduced. South Australia was possibly first in the world to allow women the vote, followed by New Zealand, which introduced this privilege. We have come a long way since the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, under which married women enjoyed property rights for the first time.

Of course, the Bill applies alike to male and female. I am delighted to support it because, as I have said, it applies not only to men and women but means at least, and for the first time, that we mere men are now equal to women and will enjoy their rights. Although I am not speaking in a partisan way, the previous Liberal Government in this State set a good example in this regard when Mrs. Joyce Steele, a former member of Parliament who was highly regarded by all members, became the first woman Whip in this State and was later appointed this State's first woman Minister. That was a major step forward and I hope that it was not the last time that such an appointment will be made (and in this respect I am not looking at any member in particular).

I have studied the committee's findings with considerable interest. Industry, commerce and various sports have

been canvassed. I believe that several somewhat peculiar problems exist in industry. Regarding the principle of equal pay, which I have supported consistently in the House, the Industrial Code has been amended at least twice in this respect, and all members are aware of the Commonwealth case, legislation in respect of which will have to be considered by us before long. Regarding its implications on South Australia, I sound a note of warning, as a realist and a pragmatist, that many problems exist in industry with regard to the equal pay decision, so that that decision may not always be to the advantage of women. I read with interest the comments of the Secretary for Labour and Industry (Mr. L. B. Bowes), who expressed some doubts. I believe this Bill might remove some of those doubts. Indeed, I sincerely hope it does. I believe Mr. Bowes was correct in expressing his opinions, although I understand the committee did not accept them.

In a daily newspaper recently much publicity was given to the role of women in the community. I believe some of the articles were of dubious value and tended to be a little debasing. On the other hand, I think some of the articles played a valuable role in setting forth the issues and probing the public conscience on the role of women in our community. At least much publicity was given to the vexed question that the member for Bragg and the committee have brought to light.

Undoubtedly, a more enlightened attitude exists today on the ready acceptance of equality and opportunities of employment for women than existed five years ago. For instance, the new head gardener at Government House is a young woman and the appointment received much publicity. This would have been unheard of even three years ago. If this Bill had been introduced as recently as three years ago it would have been cried out of court but I welcome the provision of this type of creative opportunity.

The member for Fisher talked about the role of women in this Legislature. I think he said that, if we had a House of 46 women and one man rather than 46 men and one woman, this Bill would have been passed ages ago. I believe he was right. It is a sad reflection on this community that, although this Parliament was one of the first in the world to introduce the rights of women to sit in the Parliament, it was not until 1959 that we had two women in this Parliament (Hon. Jessie Cooper and Hon. Joyce Steele), followed six years later by Mrs. Molly Byrne (member for Tea Tree Gully).

I believe this is a start, but let no-one run away with the idea that everything is being achieved by this Bill: it is not the be-all and end-all of the matter. I believe a sex discrimination board will face many problems. The duties of the board are set out in the Bill at considerable length and I believe that one of its main duties and responsibilities will be to consider complaints and recommend remedies. I am pleased that mere men now have equality with women and I believe this is a great step forward.

I commend the member for Bragg for his initiative in introducing this Bill and I welcome the assurance of the Premier of his co-operation. Whilst I have said this, let nobody be so blind as to think that this legislation will solve all problems. There will definitely be problems, particularly in the industrial field, but I hope that with common sense and the amendment of existing laws from time to time we shall be able to solve most of the inherent problems. There is no doubt that, whatever is done in this regard, there will always be some type of occupation more suited for a male on the one hand or for a female on the other hand, and it may be the choice of males

or females to go into a specific occupation. This Bill prevents discrimination against anyone wishing to go into an occupation if he so desires. I support the Bill.

Mr. RODDA (Victoria): First, let me say that man owes much to woman for the privilege of coming into this world. Secondly, he owes a further debt to woman for making his stay on earth worth while. Discrimination started years ago when the education of the boys in a family had to take priority over the education of girls. It is now recognised that in this respect the girl in a family is as important as the boy, perhaps more important than the boy because, if a girl is educated, she will educate her family and an educated family makes for an educated community.

I think the Bill is based on extremely firm foundations. I, too, pay a tribute to the member for Bragg. Perhaps it is his specialised training in the biological make-up of women that inspired him to evolve what I am sure will be a forward step in legislation. The Select Committee held 19 meetings and heard witnesses from a broad spectrum of the community with a wide variety of views. I notice that Mr. Romeyko gave evidence to the committee. Although I have not read what he said, I am sure his comments will make interesting reading. He probably conveyed more in what he did not say than he did in what he actually said, and I am sure the committee was able to make a correct evaluation.

If anyone has given much thought to the position of women in the community they will know that, in the female of the species, there has always been a vast untapped wealth of information, energy and direction that has maintained the home so well. We know that, in our own mothers' day, once the family grew up and left home the mother had time on her hands and perhaps did not make the contribution to the community that she could have made. The member for Torrens has referred to the Hon. Mrs. Steele, a former Minister of Education, and to the Hon. Mrs. Cooper. They were the first female members of this place. Of course, since then this House has been blessed by the presence of the member for Tea Tree Gully.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: "Blessed" is correct.

Mr. RODDA: Yes, I agree completely. In 1965, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Environment and Conservation and I formed a masculine group of new members that was enhanced by her presence.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: If members of the Women's Electoral Lobby heard you say that, they'd label you a "male chauvinist pig".

Mr. RODDA: Possibly, but would they be correct in doing so? This Bill will widen the spectrum in which women can contribute to the community. As the member for Torrens has said, the legislation must be administered with common sense, as all legislation should be. Membership of clubs and other areas that are the exclusive province of men bring comment from the group that the Minister of Education has mentioned by interjection, and perhaps there is reason for comments being made.

The rules dealing with such places as Adelaide Oval and Football Park (which I have not had the opportunity to attend yet) will be amended, and I hope that some of the barriers that have been raised against women will be removed. Having spent most of my life in a rural community, I can cite many instances of women being called on, at short notice, to run properties and conduct businesses. In many cases, there has been a previous domination by the rather pragmatic male, to use an adjective that has been used by one of my colleagues. Some extremely demure women who have taken over the management of

properties and businesses have been able to do all that was necessary.

One of the most successful grazing properties in the Naracoorte district is operated by a woman. She can even tail the lambs and do all the things that might embarrass the Minister of Labour and Industry and me if we were called on to help her. Again, in the Bordertown area a frail young lady had to take over the conduct of a general store at short notice. She not only kept the business going but made a success of it, and she was able to do that not only because of her business acumen but also because she had consideration for other people.

The member for Hanson has reminded me of Mandy, and I am sure that the famous Mandy made a contribution to the rights of women, although not in this part of the world. I am pleased that the Bill will receive the Government's blessing, and I am sure that all members on this side compliment the Minister and his colleagues. The legislation, which breaks new ground, will be regarded throughout Australia as an example of forward planning and of a macroscopic view. The Bill must make South Australia a better place in which to live.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): In supporting the motion, I congratulate the Select Committee on its work, and also the member for Bragg, who introduced the Bill. When that honourable member first mentioned the matter to me, I said that I would give it my full support. Indeed, I think I even agreed to second any motion that he moved in connection with the Bill. We have reached the stage where we must accept the principle of equality. I have five daughters, and at times I have not been able to "get a word in" in discussions with them. Possibly, I had to become a member of Parliament so that I would be able to speak. As a result of discussions with my daughters, I have found it easy to defeat the male members of this Parliament in debate. I trust that the people will accept the principle in the Bill and that they will treat the fair sex with equality everywhere.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I support the motion. As is the case with reports of other Select Committees from time to time, this is a good report. I think that this again points to the value of Select Committees on matters that require investigation, particularly matters about which members are not well informed. I congratulate the member for Bragg on his initiative in this matter, which he has handled with great credit to himself and the Party he represents. Looking at the minutes of the Select Committee, I can see that from the outset some political skirmishing took place. At the first meeting, the member for Elizabeth moved the following motion:

Although the committee supports the principles embodied in the Bill, its implementation would involve a financial commitment by the Government. Therefore, the committee recognising that a Sex Discrimination Board can only be established by a Government Bill, recommends that the Government should introduce a Bill to give effect to the views expressed in this report and that the present Bill should not be proceeded with.

The member for Bragg moved to amend that motion by leaving out all words after "Government" first occurring and by inserting the following words:

The committee recommends that the Bill be proceeded with, and that appropriate financial provisions for the purposes of the board be introduced by the Government during the Committee stages as was done previously during the passage of the Bill for the Public Accounts Committee Act, 1972.

When the committee divided on the amendment, the members for Glenelg and Bragg voted in favour, with the members for Tea Tree Gully and Elizabeth voting

against. The Minister of Labour and Industry, as Chairman, gave his casting vote against the amendment, which was therefore resolved in the negative. I hope that, in view of the statement by the Premier this afternoon, that skirmishing has resolved itself. I think it is regrettable that, from time to time, Government members seek to deny just recognition to the efforts of Opposition members. Since I have been a member, Opposition members have taken the initiative and moved motions, but the Government has not been big enough to accept those motions. Subsequently, it has quietly adopted the Opposition's recommendations, either administratively or by legislation (mostly administratively), seeking to deny the credit due to the Opposition. The most recent example of this is in the case of the Murray River waters. The policy statement of this Party on that matter is a direct result of an idea of the member for Chaffey. The Government has since had the good sense to adopt this policy for more liberal use of these waters in a period of free flow, but no credit has been given to the member for Chaffey.

Full credit is due to the member for Bragg for initiating this Bill and convincing the Government that it should proceed with it. Despite the Government's rather unfortunate attempts to stall in this case, it has now seen the wisdom behind the Bill and is proceeding with it. In relation to sex discrimination in education, one of the witnesses before the Select Committee was the Deputy Director-General of Education (Mr. Steinle), whose evidence appears at page 187. He welcomed this Bill. In the limited time I have had to examine the evidence, I can see opposition from possibly only the Secretary for Labour and Industry (Mr. Bowes), who was not very enthusiastic about the Bill, as possibly some industrial ramifications affecting his department were involved. Generally, the evidence seems to show that the witnesses welcomed the Bill. Certainly, Mr. Steinle was in favour. He referred to the position of a headmaster with regard to secondary school curriculum. There is a refreshing change of outlook in our schools (particularly at secondary schools that I have visited) in relation to the sort of prejudice that has created the situation in which certain subjects are considered to be the exclusive province of boys and others the province of girls. That situation is fast disappearing.

Although I believe that some educational changes in this State have been too rapid, in the area of curriculum development, particularly in secondary schools, I think that progress has been made. On my recent overseas study tour, I found that there was basically nothing wrong with having at schools a broad curriculum with a wide variety of choice open to students. This was one of the strengths of the Swedish secondary education system. Although I was certainly not as enthusiastic about Sweden as the Utopia of social progress as are some people who visit that country, I was impressed by the breadth of the school curriculum there. As Mr. Steinle said in evidence, in secondary schools nowadays boys are doing craft subjects, such as sewing, that were possibly previously regarded as sissy. Nevertheless, some boys became tailors. I do not think it hurts to know how to sew on a button. I saw some good comprehensive schools in London at which it was apparent that the bias in relation to certain subjects was fast disappearing. It was not uncommon to see girls doing woodwork, and even metalwork, and boys doing craft subjects that had formerly been the province of girls.

I see no objection to this sort of activity in our schools. However, regarding the report in last evening's *News*, there will need to be re-thinking regarding the curriculum

in primary schools. I believe that certain basic skills are fundamental. They have been neglected for some time in this State, as they have been neglected overseas, although in other countries this fact is acknowledged freely and there is a return to emphasis on these skills. Nevertheless, this is not an argument against a broad curriculum and choice of activities open to boys and girls. Mr. Steinle also referred to career opportunities for women in the Education Department. He said that there was no real bar to promotion for women in the department, but he believed that our schools were conservative institutions in some respects.

Teachers, headmasters, and education administrators have an influence within our schools, as do parents, and it seems that the influence of parents is now increasing. Mr. Steinle refers later to the opportunities for promotion available to women, and makes the point that not many women seek top administrative jobs, such as those now occupied by headmasters, and that some women in the department need educating in that they lack the motive to tackle some of the top administrative jobs in the department. In this excellent report the only blemish is the obvious politicking that took place initially during which it seemed that Government members were energised by rather base political motives. It is not clear to me who will sponsor the Bill in this House, but credit is due to the member for Bragg for his initiative and the way in which he has handled this matter. We have had a full and frank discussion, and I believe that this report deserves the unanimous support of the House. I support the motion.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I support the principles involved in the report, but I do not agree with its last point. If there were 46 women and one man in this House, we would not be discussing this proposition. Within our society there has been some discrimination against women for many years. There will always be, even if this legislation is passed, many males in the community who will discriminate against women and, in some cases, women will discriminate against men, because of their sex. I hope this legislation will be passed and that the Government will implement it before Christmas, but certainly, at the latest, before the end of this session.

Mr. DUNCAN (Elizabeth): As a member of the Select Committee that considered this matter, I congratulate the member for Bragg who has done an excellent job. This is good legislation, and credit is due to him for introducing it in the form in which he did. The Premier referred to two matters that the committee decided needed altering but, basically, the Bill, as it comes from the Select Committee, deserves support, and it has mine. However, I believe that discrimination occurs within this Parliament, and this attitude should be considered. In the employment practices there is some discrimination, because I see no reason why House messengers must all be males: on the other hand, I see no reason, basically, why the kitchen and dining-room staff should be females.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I cannot see why all Opposition members should be male!

Mr. DUNCAN: The Minister has a good point, and one that the Liberal Party should consider when it recalls nominations, particularly for the seat of Millicent because of the impending departure of the Deputy Premier. We should give a lead to the community by cleaning up our backyard first. The second matter to which I refer is a most serious example of discrimination. Members will have noticed that on the entrance door of one of the President's Galleries in the Legislative Council are placed the ridiculously archaic words "Gentlemen Visitors Only". What an appalling situation in this day and age! It seems

the only reason for this wording is the archaic attitude and views of Legislative Councillors, and Opposition members, after having expressed their sentiments about this Bill, should influence their colleagues to have that obnoxious form of discrimination eliminated. It is a slur on this Parliament, and I ask Opposition members to bring this matter to the attention of their colleagues so that they can take the necessary remedial action.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE secured the adjournment of the debate.

### INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr. Millhouse:

That this House condemn the Government for its abject failure so far to give any lead in the present grave situation of industrial unrest and disruption and call on it immediately to urge all members of the community to observe the processes of law and in particular to use the machinery of industrial arbitration and conciliation and to observe decisions made thereby.

(Continued from September 18. Page 1017.)

The Hon. D. H. McKEE (Minister of Labour and Industry): I am surprised to see the member for Mitcham in the Chamber, because I did not believe he paid much attention to his motion, which I believe is a bit of politicking. His reason for moving the motion was his deep hatred of the trade union movement.

Mr. Millhouse: That's not right.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: He continually uses his privilege in this place to criticise and attack the trade union movement. Members on this side, (I think most members of the House) are getting sick and tired of listening to his ranting and raving about the affairs of the trade union movement. He continually uses privilege to demonstrate his intense hatred for working-class people. After moving the motion, he spent the remainder of his speech attacking the Secretary of the Transport Workers Union (Mr. Nyland).

Mr. Payne: From within the House!

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: Yes. He referred to that matter in almost every second line of his speech. I suppose I would be out of order in dealing further with this matter as it is the subject of a court appeal for the reinstatement of the two union members concerned.

The SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour and Industry would be out of order.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: That is what I thought. The member for Mitcham asked the Government to take action, but he knows very well that the State Government cannot do so. He read at length from the union rule book, from which he must have got some indication that the union concerned is a Commonwealth union. He ought to know that the State has no jurisdiction over a Commonwealth union and that it therefore cannot take action against such a union. He was purely making a cheap political—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister means the honourable member.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: Yes, Sir. What he should have done was get his colleague, Senator Hall, to raise the matter in the Senate. He—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is referring to the honourable member.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: The honourable member wished to play up the local scene, and it would have been useless to have the matter raised in Canberra. The honourable member also claimed that a certain person was planted in a meeting of the Transport Workers Union. The honourable member indicated that that person was a spy of some sort, but the honourable member

was unwilling to name him. It appears to me that the remarks made by the honourable member were based on rumours from a snide little pimp who was planted at this trade union meeting. I am convinced that the honourable member's remarks were based on rumours and are complete and utter rubbish, and should be treated as such. I oppose the motion but, in closing, I should like to say that I am confident that the South Australian Industrial Court, headed by Judge Bleby and his colleagues, is a capable and responsible tribunal in handling the industrial affairs of the State.

Mr. CUMBE (Torrens): The operative words of the motion are "abject failure", and I believe the Minister has illustrated his abject failure to consider the motion.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: He went on to refer to the T.W.U.

Mr. Gunn: Who's "he"?

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: You know!

Mr. CUMBE: The motion condemns the South Australian Government.

The Hon. D. H. McKEE: The motion is only a camouflage.

Mr. Venning: Order!

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Rocky River knows what Standing Orders provide and if he wishes to usurp the authority of the Speaker when the Speaker is in charge of the House he must suffer the consequences of Standing Orders. I will not warn the honourable member for Rocky River on any future occasion about the attitude he has adopted, so this is the last warning I will give him; the next time I will not warn him.

Mr. CUMBE: When the Minister spoke, I noticed that he said that the mover of the motion was simply attacking the trade union movement. Having read what the member for Mitcham had to say, I point out to the Minister in particular that I do not intend attacking the trade union movement but wish to direct my remarks more particularly to the wording of the motion. I will not refer to the previous debate in *Hansard* on this matter, because all members can read the comments of the member for Mitcham. The motion starts off by condemning the South Australian Government "for its abject failure so far to give any lead in the present grave situation of industrial unrest and disruption". In effect, the motion seeks to condemn the Government for its inaction.

Let us now look at the question of industrial unrest. No honourable member would deny that 1974 has been a period of almost unprecedented industrial unrest in South Australia. I believe that the only time more man-hours were lost was during the O'Shea case in 1969, an affair which emanated from outside this State but which affected other States. The latest available statistics on this matter that I have been able to obtain from the Australian Bureau of Statistics apply to the period up until the end of May this year. Later figures are available in the press, but I am quoting from official figures to give some idea of the present position, or as it was until recently in South Australia. I will compare two identical periods. Between January and May, 1973, South Australia lost 46 000 working days, compared to the almost unbelievable figure of 205 900 working days for the same period in 1974.

Can any Government member deny, therefore, that we are going through a period of serious industrial unrest? Surely an almost five-fold increase in the number of working days lost would give a Government of any political complexion cause for serious concern, and it would especially concern the Minister of Labour and Industry at the time. Therefore, these figures alone support the contention that



South Australia is in a grave period of industrial unrest. If one examines some of the situations that have led to these figures, one realises that they do not take into account the recent serious industrial dispute that occurred in South Australia, namely, the demarcation dispute on the steel wharf at Port Adelaide. As far as I know, no member of the Waterside Workers Federation was out of work as a result of that dispute; indeed, some of them had nice jobs as a result of it. Further, as far as I know, no member of the Transport Workers Union was put out of work, but some members could have been if the dispute had persisted much longer. No working days were actually lost in that dispute. The figures I have given from the Commonwealth Statistician exclude that dispute. The important thing to remember, however, is that, as a result of that dispute, many jobs in industry were jeopardised because employers were unable to take delivery of the steel tied up at the wharf.

In addition, we must bear in mind the source of the figures, namely, other areas and other industrial disputes. I believe that demarcation disputes are the most unnecessary and distasteful type of industrial dispute we can experience, because many of them happen over misunderstandings and for petty reasons. Therefore, undoubtedly there has been serious industrial unrest in this State. Unfortunately, some of these disputes have occurred in the building industry, either in the manufacture of building materials or on building sites, whether from the processors and makers of cement for foundations, builders labourers or tradesmen associated with building. The result has been either that many young people have been unable to get the house they wanted when they wanted it, or that they can now get their house at a time when interest charges and the financial climate have changed dramatically. They have found, through no fault of their own, that they must pay much more for the house they want.

We have experienced disputes in the baking industry because relativities have got out of adjustment, and we have experienced several disputes in the metal industries and other industries. Undoubtedly, there has been much industrial unrest and disruption. We have experienced transport strikes, and who suffers? It is only the average citizen who can be disadvantaged. The motion goes further: it calls on the Government to act. I would have thought that the Minister, in reply, would deal with that part of the motion which is worded in the positive. The motion calls on the Government "immediately to urge all members of the community". Did we hear the responsible Minister today, speaking on behalf of the Government and its members, appeal to all members of the community to observe the processes of law in South Australia? No, he glossed right over that part of the motion. However, appeals have been made by leaders of both sides in the Commonwealth sphere, and Mr. Clyde Cameron's appeal has been the subject of a separate motion. He, incidentally, hit the nail on the head in one of his statements.

Mr. Egerton, from Queensland, who is another prominent trade unionist, has made several appeals. I quoted him as long ago as July, but no honourable member took any notice of my comment then to the effect that he, too, had hit the nail on the head. Mr. Egerton, who has been making pertinent comments in the press in his capacity as a Queensland union leader, has caused a controversy. However, I admire the forthright way in which he has come forward and the fearless manner in which he has made his statements. His comments, which have caused a controversy among his colleagues, have not always been agreed to but, significantly,

the Prime Minister and the Minister for Labor and Immigration have agreed with his comments. The Prime Minister and the Minister have also agreed with Mr. Hawke in whatever capacity he was speaking and under whichever cap he happened to be wearing at the time. The motion also urges the Government to ask the community to observe the due processes of law. However, in many cases these processes have not been observed and, as a result, we have seen that decisions of this State's industrial tribunal have been openly flouted.

I agree with what the Minister has said, namely, that we have a fine industrial tribunal in the State, presided over by Mr. Justice Bleby. The motion, in effect, calls on the Minister to urge all members of the community to support Mr. Justice Bleby and his tribunal. Surely, if the Minister were genuine, he would have done that. The motion also urges "all members of the community to use the machinery of industrial arbitration and conciliation and to observe decisions made thereby". However, these decisions have not always been observed, as we all know. Unless we want to go back to the law of the jungle, I believe we have to support the principle of conciliation and arbitration and I deliberately put them in that order. I believe conciliation must come before arbitration: conciliation is the first step and arbitration is the last step.

If we are going to have a system of conciliation and arbitration in South Australia and if it is going to work to the advantage of all, irrespective of one's side of politics, we must seriously consider whether the law requires amendment. Whilst we are acting under the existing law we should see that the decisions handed down by the relevant industrial tribunal are duly observed. It is no good having the tribunal set up to do certain things if it is not going to work. I believe this is extremely fundamental. I am a great believer in having a tribunal in this State to which we can put the case of either party, so that each can be heard equally, and I believe it is the duty of the Government and the Minister concerned to see that the tribunal operates efficiently and its decisions are observed.

As we heard nothing from the Minister on this, we must agree with the wording of the motion. The Minister hurled a tirade of abuse at the mover, and I am not commenting on the remarks made by the member for Mitcham when introducing the Bill. The Minister said it was an attack on the trade union movement but I am addressing myself entirely to the wording of the motion. I am not attacking in any way the trade union movement. I believe that all members will agree that there are good trade unions and that others are not so good, just as there are good and bad employers. However, any decision handed down by the industrial tribunal must be observed by the parties concerned. What lead have we had from the Government? So far in this debate, not a single word! I believe the actual figures are worse than those quoted. I will quote the figures for 1974: January does not apply, because most people are on holidays then; however, in February, 16 100 working days were lost; in March, 99 100 working days; in April, 37 200; and in May, 52 200. These figures are staggering. They are no good for South Australia, they are no good for the Government, and they are no good for the trade union movement. In view of the abject failure of the Minister to reply to this motion in any constructive way, I have no alternative but to support the motion.

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I support the motion and I will address myself only to the first part of it. The member for Torrens has already considered some parts of the motion and other colleagues of mine will

also refer to certain aspects. I am particularly incensed that the Premier, when called upon by members of this House to consider matters of grave industrial concern, fails to meet his commitments and fails to come forward with answers. It does not matter whether a request is made in respect of an individual or a group of people: the commitment having been given by the Premier that he will investigate the charges made by members on this side, a reply should be given, even if it is against the philosophy of his Party or against the thinking of the person who has asked the question.

We should be able to receive from the Premier replies to questions about difficulties being encountered by people in the community. On August 29, I asked a question about difficulties affecting Messrs. H. and A. Davies of Salisbury, requesting the Premier to intervene if necessary, or at least to indicate that he understood the problems that were besetting these people who had been denied the opportunity to undertake their normal activities of a trucking operation. When the Premier was asked to examine this matter, he replied:

As I am unaware of the circumstances of this dispute, I shall have the matter investigated and give the Leader a reply when I have considered all the factors after they have been reported to me.

I know from subsequent events that the Premier did inquire and that questions were asked in several places about the comments and charges I had made on behalf of those people. It would be remiss of me to deal much further with this subject, because the matter is now before the courts, although when I asked the question and for a long time after that it was not before the courts. Even if the Premier's inquiries had extended beyond the time when the matter was taken to court, a simple statement that he had had the matter investigated and could not say anything more, because the matter was *sub judice*, would have been a reply and an indication to members of this House and the people that the Government accepted the responsibility of interceding on behalf of those people who were aggrieved by the action that had come directly from Mr. Nyland, of the Transport Workers Union.

This matter has still to be resolved and the people concerned have been denied the opportunity to carry on, without fear or harassment, the trucking business in which they have been involved for many years. It is a condemnation of members opposite that they have not seen fit to have this matter brought forward, and the Premier has failed to give the reply that he promised.

Many people in many unions are concerned at the action being taken by their "elected" managements. This action takes away the opportunity to continue in employment before proper action is taken in a court. It prevents them from working five days a week and from working overtime. In that way, it prevents these people from earning additional money to provide the bare necessities for their families.

In referring to a letter that I have, I will not identify the writer or the company concerned, because I find abhorrent what has occurred in this place recently when members opposite have denigrated organisations without being sure even that the organisations were involved in the incidents to which they have been referring. I refer to the instance in which the member for Elizabeth found it necessary to say that he did not want it thought that he was talking about a certain engineering business in the Salisbury area. I refer also to the incident last week when the member for Adelaide denigrated a company for having failed to meet its financial commitments, when that com-

pany was not even involved in a commitment to the persons concerned. The individual concerned indicated that he had been doing work in a private capacity; he had never said that the company of which he happened to be a director was involved. Indeed, information about this was obtained from the wife of the brother of the person who was denigrated in this place by the member for Adelaide. I hope that in due course the member for Adelaide, the Premier, or some other member opposite will have the guts to put the record straight in an attempt to undo the damage already done. Intimidation is not uncommon in industrial affairs. Although the matter to which I have just referred is not directly related to industrial affairs, it is an example of an intimidatory act that is to be deplored.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think that the honourable Leader should come back to the motion, as I do not think his present remarks relate to it.

Dr. EASTICK: I was making the point that intimidation is not unheard of in industrial affairs. This letter, which refers to a strike that continued in the metropolitan area for five weeks, states:

During this strike, malpractice was rife and employees have told me that:

- (1) Supporters of the militants on workmen's compensation at the time of the strike were encouraged to express their views and vote. Opponents of the militants on workers' compensation were told they were not entitled to a vote.
- (2) An incompetent or corrupt chairman stifled moderate discussion. Union members had no understanding of meeting procedure and did not know how to contend with this attitude.
- (3) Meetings were stacked with militant supporters who were no longer employed by the company.
- (4) Strike payments were not paid to those supporting a return to work.
- (5) Moderates received intimidatory telephone calls.

Mr. Wells: What have you been quoting?

Dr. EASTICK: This is a letter from a person who has intimate knowledge of this situation. However, as I have said, I do not believe in naming people or companies. The letter is available if the Premier wants to see it. Unfortunately, reports about these matters are not documented, but I receive them from people about whose personal veracity I have no doubt. It is well known that members of the metal trade unions recently had several stand-downs associated with one-day strikes. At the property of a big company in the metropolitan area, some union members decided that they would like to tell the union hierarchy what they thought about certain matters, so they circulated a petition that I shall be happy to make available to members opposite for their perusal. It indicates that the members were not at all happy about being called out on a matter that had not been arbitrated or discussed properly; they did not want to lose a days pay. They were happy to stay at work and let the shop stewards or others discuss the matter rationally. The petition was circulated on the shop floor. After it had been circulated for some time, the shop stewards moved in and started to intimidate people who were about to sign.

In addition, when the person who was responsible for starting the petition (and he placed it in my hands) went to his car, he found that all four tyres were flat. The following morning, he was called before the shop stewards and told not to take further action of that kind, although his action had been completely democratic. He had simply expressed his point of view and that of others who wanted to continue to work for the benefit that would accrue to their families. Since then, the climate has started to change, with men such as

Mr. Egerton and Mr. Cameron having the courage to say what has been said for some time by many other people: that it is high time that the people who are causing so much time to be lost in this way took a look at their position.

About this time, unemployment started to become a fact of life. That situation does not make any member on this side happy. However, the unemployment position has deteriorated and will continue to deteriorate. I spoke about unemployment in my speeches in the Address in Reply, Loan Estimates, and Budget debates. At first, members opposite said I was talking hoo-hah, but on the second and third occasions they were quieter. It is interesting to see that they are not saying anything now, because at long last they have come to accept the fact that unemployment is escalating. Why should it take unemployment to bring the hierarchy of the trade union movement back to its senses? Why should it need the perilous situation to develop of people pricing their labour out of the viable field before common sense prevails? Why must people and their families be disadvantaged before it is realised that Government leadership and common sense are needed? If the Premier answers questions that he has been asked it will help to relieve the tension in relation to several of these matters.

Another aspect of this matter is highlighted by a letter to which I intend to refer. In this case, people are denied the opportunity to support their union in a way they would like. This is an instance where the union hierarchy has failed to extend the common courtesy of replying to a letter. The letter to which I refer states:

Please find enclosed a photocopy of an order (and letter I sent to the Vehicle Builders Union in June) issued by the consent of the V.B.U. giving this company the right to recover monies for which I have received no goods to which I am in debt for.

I have committed no crime (other than not paying my union dues), not broken any law, yet the V.B.U. has given consent to these people, and any Tom, Dick, or Harry they wish to employ, without being accompanied by an officer of the law or a warrant, to break in and enter our home if need be, to recover goods and chattels to cover union dues—I get no say or hearing whatsoever.

Here is the union movement that only weeks ago, were screaming their heads off (including Messrs. Hawke, Whitlam, and Dunstan and King of S.A.) over the bugging devices used to delve into people's private lives. This is the union movement in Australia today, this is the treatment one gets after 34 years membership with a union. Millions of people throughout the world gave their lives for freedom. I myself spent the best part of six years with the R.N. between 1939-46 for the same cause.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader is getting miles away from the motion: he must come back to the motion being considered by the House.

Dr. EASTICK: The motion condemns the Government for its abject failure so far to give any lead in the present grave situation of industrial unrest and disruption. This is a situation in which a person has been denied justice because of the failure of the union to meet its commitments. I should like to read a copy of the letter that that person wrote to the union when his account first became payable. It states:

I am well aware that I am in arrears with my contributions, for the first time in 34 years membership; but in the past I have belonged to a trade union whereby if I raise a point on some matter or other (through the proper channels—the shop steward) I got a reply, but not so with the V.B.U. The union has the right to withdraw their labour from an employer until such time as that employer meets the union's demands, so I believe I have that same right to withhold my contributions until such time as the

union meets my demands and until such times as they do I shall withhold payment—one can't be fairer than that. When I required help from the union there was none, but they are all too willing to take my money.

The letter continues with other relevant details. The issue with which he is concerned is the summons he received, as follows:

Our above client has instructed us to give you final notice that unless the above amount is paid to this office within five days, legal proceedings will follow without further notice. If forwarding payments through the post, please state your creditor's name in order to enable receipts to be returned promptly and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your receipt. If you make payment by cheque, 5c will be deducted to cover bank charges.

These are the circumstances as they were told to me by the person who gave me this document. He approached a shop steward of the V.B.U. who promised that he would get a reply from the union. Later, he was asked to telephone the union secretary, which he did. He still has not had a reply, and a simple request for assistance or an acknowledgment of his existence has been denied him, with the result that there is a confrontation and consequent distrust. This one worker is multiplied many hundreds of times by those who are disgusted with the failure of their representative to give them the common courtesy of recognition. This situation is apparent in every State, with an increasing number of defections from the union movement as a result.

Mr. Slater: That's a—

Dr. EASTICK: I can show the honourable member my records in which I have many similar letters. The person to whom I am referring was a member of a union for 34 years, not someone who failed to give service as a shop steward.

Mr. Slater: I should like to hear the other side of the story.

Mr. Payne: Why didn't he go to the union?

Dr. EASTICK: I said he was a unionist for 34 years, and I make the point that an increasing number of people, many who wish to become members of an employee organisation are disenchanted with the action taken in their name and are resisting this sort of disruption to their income, family life, and way of living. I believe there is every need to support this motion, not only the first part but all aspects of it.

Mr. WELLS secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 18. Page 1019.)

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General) moved: That this debate be further adjourned.

Mr. Millhouse: Go on with it!

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (22)—Messrs. Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Crimes, Duncan, Dunstan, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson, Jennings, King (teller), Langley, McKee, McRae, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, and Wells.

Noes (17)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Millhouse (teller), Rodda, Russack, Tonkin, and Venning.

Majority of 5 for the Ayes.

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

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

### NATURAL GAS PIPELINES AUTHORITY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council requested the House of Assembly to give permission for the Minister of Development and Mines (Hon. D. J. Hopgood), a member of the House of Assembly, to attend and give evidence before the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Natural Gas Pipelines Authority Act Amendment Bill.

### ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (CROSSINGS)

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

### STATE BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (BOUNDARIES)

Adjourned debate on second reading.  
(Continued from October 15. Page 1486.)

Mr. LANGLEY (Unley): First, I must say I support the Bill. Also, I should like to congratulate the Minister of Local Government on his initiative in setting up the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas which, as a matter of fact, was wanted by 58 per cent of the councils in South Australia. Any report that comes before Parliament is never perfect, and in this case the Opposition members spoke strongly against the report of the Commission in their little boroughs.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Their rotten boroughs.

Mr. LANGLEY: The Minister of Local Government was, as usual, sporting enough to have another look at this report and so give the councils an opportunity to make further submissions. Naturally, we have seen some changes, but to some councils the report is still not acceptable, although I do not think that anything of this sort would ever be agreed to by everyone. Members opposite, and on the Government side too, know as a fact that their constituents are not always right and do not always agree with their members, but in this case more councils would agree with the Bill than would disagree. I am sure the Minister has done an excellent job, and the Royal Commission has been as helpful as possible in its recommendations. In the Unley City Council area, three members are concerned—the member for Bragg, the member for Mitcham, and I. So far, I have not noticed the member for Mitcham speaking in this debate.

Mr. Gunn: Where is he this evening?

Mr. LANGLEY: That is his business. The member for Bragg became almost the Leader of the Opposition in this debate when he spoke of “the whole State”, yet he did not mention the area he represents in the district of the Unley City Council, which council is very much in favour of this legislation and is one of the best councils in South Australia.

Mr. Evans: What about its neighbours?

Mr. LANGLEY: I have not had much to do with its neighbours. The council areas of Mitcham and Marion border my area, but the whole of my district is in the Unley City Council area. The area of Eastwood, which was formerly in the Burnside City Council area, is now, by recommendation, to be included in the new boundaries of the Unley City Council area, which is very good. I cannot see why it should ever have been in the Burnside council area, because it has no link with that area.

Mr. Evans: You reckon everything should be in Unley!

Mr. LANGLEY: The only link it has with the Burnside council is Greenhill Road, Fullarton Road and Glenside Hospital. I favour the inclusion of Eastwood in the Unley City Council area because it is linked with that area at the present time. We have often heard members opposite speak of “the wishes of the people”. How do we find them out? Do we call on every house and find out or do we do it by compulsory voting, or do we go here, there and everywhere to find out? Local government elections in all districts are much the same: very rarely do more than 50 per cent of the people vote at council elections, and sometimes the percentage is as low as 10 per cent.

Mr. Becker: There are ways of finding out.

Mr. LANGLEY: But how do we know the wishes of the people if they do not come along and vote?

Mr. Gunn: The same way as with trade union matters!

Mr. LANGLEY: But how do we get to know the wishes of the people without having compulsory voting? That is the only way to do it, as I see it.

Mr. Gunn: What about the trade unions?

Mr. LANGLEY: I am not referring to them: I am asking, how do we find out the wishes of the people?

Mr. Allen: Didn't you get any petitions objecting to the Royal Commission's recommendations?

Mr. LANGLEY: I have said that the Unley City Council is in favour of this Bill, and I am speaking in favour of it, too. I am asking, how do we find out the wishes of the people? I do not know whether the voting in the District of Frome was 50 per cent, 55 per cent or 12 per cent.

Mr. Allen: How does 94 per cent strike you?

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. LANGLEY: I am talking about Frome. What about West Beach; what happened there? The people there were in favour of amalgamating with Henley Beach. What about everyone in the Glenelg council area? How do we find out what they feel over the whole area, not in one little pocket? If any honourable member can tell me any way of determining the wishes of the people other than by seeking out every person or having a compulsory vote, I shall be only too pleased to eat my words. I listened to comments about an area concerned about rating. I recall Colonel Light Gardens (in the member for Mitcham's area, where I used to live) where everyone was in favour of not amalgamating with the Mitcham council area, and that looks like happening under the recommendations of the Royal Commission. However, in those days the council rates of Colonel Light Gardens were lower than the rates of the Mitcham council, so the people did not want to join the Mitcham council area; they preferred to stay on their own. The rating in Colonel Light Gardens is now higher than in the Mitcham council area, so the people all want to transfer to Mitcham.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You would think the little chocolate soldier would be here to say something about that matter this evening, wouldn't you?

Mr. LANGLEY: No; I think he has given Colonel Light Gardens away. No-one wants amalgamation when it hits his pocket; that makes all the difference. If an amalgamation takes place that will benefit the people, no-one knows better than members of Parliament that it is when it hits the pocket that people have a few words to say.

Dr. Eastick: Tell the South Australian community about the mismanagement.

Mr. LANGLEY: I do not know about that. I am not too proud to put myself up for election with members opposite any day they like. I am not too proud to admit defeat if necessary and, if my opponent won, I would take it in good part. Indeed, if I was defeated I would be the first to congratulate my opponent. I stood against Mr. McLeay on one occasion. The member for Mitcham unluckily did not become the member for Boothby because of some "razzle dazzle" in an Army camp. A little bit of finance came into it, and apparently a few extra raffle tickets were bought to ensure that a certain person got in.

The SPEAKER: Will the honourable member for Unley say what his remarks have got to do with the Bill?

Mr. LANGLEY: I am sorry, Sir. I was replying to an interjection. I have listened intently during the debate to the contribution made by the member for Davenport, who always tries to upset Government members and who pursued political motives in relation to boundaries. I must admit one thing: that the two electoral districts in the State that would be in more danger than any others are Glenelg and Hanson, the boundaries for neither of which have changed although many others have been altered.

Mr. Gunn: What about Brighton?

Mr. LANGLEY: If the honourable member thinks his Party can win Brighton, that is all right. I am not sure that it will, in any case. A 58 per cent vote was received by the Labor Party last time, so that would involve a fairly good swing. If my arithmetic is correct, there was a margin of 861 votes in Glenelg and 838 votes in Hanson at the last election. It can be seen, therefore, that either of those seats could easily be retained or lost by the Party holding them at present.

Mr. Rodda: What about Henley and Grange?

Mr. LANGLEY: I think the margin there is much greater than that.

Mr. Rodda: I'm talking about local government.

Mr. LANGLEY: The Minister of Environment and Conservation will still win. As the electoral boundaries have not changed, I can see no reason why in future there should be a different result than that obtained at the last election. As I have already stated, we cannot have everyone agreeing to proposed council boundary alterations, for the simple reason that not everyone likes change: for many, it is like something out of this world to have change. Many people do not want change but are content to live in the same old groove from day to day.

During his contribution to the debate, the member for Gouger said that the local member of Parliament was not as well known as the local councillor. I am sorry that I must disagree with him in this respect, because, especially in suburban areas (and I have been to many of them), the people would not know who their councillor was if they were asked. Indeed, in many cases they would not even know who was their member of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Russack: I did not say that.

Mr. LANGLEY: I am sure that in his district the member for Gouger is known better than are councillors. Members of Parliament are called upon to do much work that councillors should perhaps do, merely because they are better known; I am sure that is what the member for Gouger said.

Mr. Russack: I said the councillor had a harder job.

Mr. LANGLEY: I am not speaking on behalf of the Unley City Council for the simple reason that I do not think there are many on my side. It is indeed noticeable that the portion of the Unley City Council area that I represent is not as conservative an area as those areas represented by the members for Bragg and Mitcham.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: At least the people in your district pay their water rates, which is more than the people at Burnside do when they are told by the member for Davenport not to pay them.

Mr. LANGLEY: True. At least I have had no complaints about people in my district having had their water cut off. The Unley council has told me that it is satisfied with the present set-up. I am voicing not merely the opinion of the council when I say that this Bill should be commended to all and that, instead of living in the dim, dark ages, we should be more progressive, because it will not be long before amalgamations and takeovers occur, as is happening today.

Mr. Coumbe: Or pack-ups.

Mr. LANGLEY: Some people are not sufficiently capable in business. Smaller councils will rue what is happening today. Had they amalgamated, it would have benefited them financially. With those remarks, I support the Bill.

Mr. BLACKER (Flinders): I rise to support the second reading of this Bill, before it is referred to a Select Committee. I do so because this has been an attempt to bring about a change in local government, to try and up-date local government boundaries, and to make modifications to cater more specifically for today's needs. However, I do not altogether agree with the recommendations made by the Royal Commission. I think I should preface my remarks by saying that the Royal Commission's original report included recommendations which were against the wishes of district councils and which favoured, for instance, the Corporation of Port Lincoln. Now, with the amendments to the Royal Commission's report that the Minister has introduced, the situation is almost the reverse: the Corporation of Port Lincoln is disappointed and the District Council of Port Lincoln is considerably happier.

In speaking to the Bill, the member for Torrens said the Opposition did not favour a greater Adelaide council or the establishment of regional councils. I must stress that regional councils are not a good thing for South Australia and are certainly not in the interests of the people whom they are supposed to represent. The smaller the council the more personal representation one has. That does not mean that we need 200 small councils to achieve that sort of representation. For economic purposes, we must obtain a balance. Yesterday, the member for Whyalla (and I am sorry he is not here now) raised a point which, on behalf of my constituents at Tumby Bay, I must challenge. He said:

When I visited Tumby Bay a year or two ago I interviewed members of the progress association. At that time I suggested that the Tumby Bay, Cleve and Port Neill councils should join on a basis of mutual understanding, and I was surprised at the reaction to my suggestion. Members of the progress association were violently opposed to the idea, and they said that there would not be any common approach in connection with those three councils meeting regularly; I cannot accept that. We must be bigger and broadminded and we must discard the narrow-minded, conservative attitude that has been adopted for about 40 years.

As I know the members of the progress association personally, I believe that accusation is more than can be accepted. I excuse the member for Whyalla, because he has no understanding of the sweeping statement he has

made. He has suggested that an area of about 10 400 square kilometres be administered by one council.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You don't agree with that?

Mr. BLACKER: No.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Then you'd oppose Bjelke-Petersen and Chalk (both members of your Party)—

Mr. BLACKER: Possibly.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: —who have areas 10 times as large as that. Neither of them will be there long, having regard to the way in which they are carrying on.

Mr. BLACKER: I do not think any area of 10 400 km<sup>2</sup> incorporating 4 830 km of roads could be effectively handled by one council and provide the personal representation to which most South Australians have become accustomed. To illustrate the magnitude of this proposal, I point out that if a grader operator was to work the grader for 32 hours a week (and I do not allow in that time for maintenance) at 6.4 km/h, assuming that four passes of the grader were sufficient to grade the road and not taking into account the drains and gutters usually dealt with by a grader operator, it would take one operator two years to grade the roads in the area suggested by the member for Whyalla. That shows the extreme nature of his suggestion. In dealing with Eyre Peninsula, at page 44 the first report of the Royal Commission states:

The next matter specifically affecting councils in the Eyre Planning Area is that they are, as a general rule, more closely associated with activities such as the supply of electricity to ratepayers, and the local hospital, than councils in other parts of the State. Both of these matters involve the councils in the handling of considerable additional sums of money and give to the council some staff flexibility. I believe that is an acknowledgement by the Commission that slightly different circumstances are involved. As I have said, my district includes four councils and one corporation, namely, the Corporation of Port Lincoln. The Franklin Harbor council has a rate revenue of about \$90 000 (I have only been able to obtain round figures for these councils); the rate revenue for the Cleve council is \$115 000; for the Lincoln District Council it is \$165 000; and for the Tumby Bay council the rate revenue this year is estimated to be between \$145 000 and \$150 000.

Since local government boundaries became a political topic of interest, in that short period I have had from constituents to present to the House five petitions containing 1 560 signatures. The fact that there have been so many signatories in such a short time emphasises the interest that ratepayers have taken in the matter and the way they have responded to it. Another indication of this interest was a ratepayers' poll conducted by a small group in the Lincoln council area (although I certainly cannot vouch for the validity of the poll, I doubt whether it constituted a legal poll). The question asked was, "Are you in favour of a change in local government boundaries?", and this was set out on a short form. People were asked to sign the form, give their address, mark it, and place it in a sealed box that was later opened in the presence of a justice of the peace. Boxes were placed in most country towns, with three or four being set up in Port Lincoln. Of the 596 people who volunteered to cast a vote, 568 indicated that they wanted the boundaries to remain the same. Only 16 people wanted a change. The scrutineers considered that 12 forms were informal, but even if they were taken to be in favour of a change the total percentage in favour was very small. This voluntary poll was taken at the instigation of a small group of ratepayers who had absolutely no connection with a district council.

Mr. Harrison: Was there an argument for and against that question?

Mr. BLACKER: The simple question was asked, after all the publicity (I think the Minister would know about this) in the local press. The matter was dealt with on the front page of the local newspaper at least four times, and it was dealt with on the second and third pages on several other occasions. It would be wrong of me to suggest what side of the argument the editor supported, but I can say that each side accused him of supporting the other side.

Mr. Harrison: Did the council send out information for and against?

Mr. BLACKER: The council had nothing whatever to do with the poll.

Mr. Harrison: It should have.

Mr. BLACKER: Maybe.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to address his remarks to the Chair and not to another honourable member.

Mr. BLACKER: I apologise, Sir. On September 7 a ratepayers' protest march was organised in Port Lincoln. This was an eye-opener to me, as I had never seen a protest march in Port Lincoln before; in fact, I was somewhat anxious about the outcome, because the people of Port Lincoln are not normally agitated to the extent of entering into a protest march. However, on this occasion 400 people marched. The Minister received from me (and no doubt from other people) a letter outlining what happened on that day. Part of the press report covering the protest march states:

Almost 400 people took part in the protest, most of them being ratepayers of the District Councils of Tumby Bay and Lincoln, but including some residents of the city of Port Lincoln. The orderly march through Liverpool Street and Tasman Terrace was preceded by a police car and led by a protester carrying an Australian flag at half mast followed by pallbearers . . .

Following that, I received numerous letters of complaint from people about what would happen to their areas. One of the letters says:

To take a council which has a revenue of about \$160 000 which is renowned for the quality of its work and almost double its area is in my thoughts a very retrograde step.

Another letter says:

We prefer to retain our identity, not to be forced into an amalgamation.

Another letter says:

As a school bus contractor for 25 years, I have found this council to be most co-operative and efficient.

Also, I received a comprehensive letter from the Tumby Bay Progress Association indicating the feelings of the people in the Tumby Bay area. Part of the letter says:

If the area is greatly enlarged as was indicated, our people of the area will lose the effect of closer local government, and lose a lot of district pride, because the running of the council will be: (a) in another area; (b) further away from the area in which most of us now live; (c) the larger the area the more ratepayers are going to become a number instead of a person.

Probably one of the greatest fears of people opposed to the change is that they will become numbers instead of respected citizens of the community. A letter, which attacks the Government, says:

I feel this is just another blatant example of being overruled and tramped into the ground by a Government who have not examined the position thoroughly. We want the councils left as they are.

That was one of the milder comments on the Government's attitude. Much of the criticism of the Royal Commission has centred on its terms of reference. The first part of the terms of reference deals specifically with a minimum

rate revenue of \$50 000. The smallest district council in my area has a rate revenue of \$90 000, and two councils have a rate revenue which is three times as great as the suggested minimum. So, when the Royal Commission's report suggested alterations to their boundaries, the councils found the recommendations hard to take. In fact, many of the people who gave evidence to the Royal Commission at Port Lincoln were very dejected about the results.

I know personally 27 of the 31 people who gave evidence in Port Lincoln. Whilst I know the other four people by name, I do not know them personally. Of the 27 people whom I know personally, at least 24 were against the change in local government boundaries. The Royal Commission has claimed that few of the many rate-payers who gave evidence had any real understanding of the reasons put forward about the city of Port Lincoln. So, contempt has been expressed for those who went out of their way to give evidence. Of the 24 people who opposed any alteration in boundaries, several were district clerks and two were former chairmen of district councils. So, to suggest that they had no idea of what they were talking about is not correct.

Much of the dissatisfaction with the Royal Commission's report was brought about by the interpretation of "community of interests", which is very difficult to define. The Royal Commission suggested that it should be an area served by a town or city. Using Port Lincoln as an example, perhaps Buckleboo and Minnipa could be brought in, because all that area is served by Port Lincoln. However, this is not a realistic approach. Many people have become confused and dejected as a result of the Royal Commission's interpretation of "community of interests". Some of the other objections dealt with the Commission's forcing a change without the consent of the people. People do not like being overridden and being told what to do. I agree with the Minister that this is a big problem, to which I cannot give a ready answer. If a proposition had been placed before the people and if they had been allowed to decide by referendum, much of the antagonism would have been avoided.

Each of the district councils in my area has a major town on which the council is based. For example, the Tumby Bay District Council is based on Tumby Bay and serves the smaller communities in that area. Cleve is another example. Again, the Franklin Harbor council is based on Cowell, and the Lincoln District Council is based on Cummins. It has been stated that Cummins is near the border of the council area and that perhaps the council should be based on Coult, but we should consider the arterial road that leads to Port Lincoln. For convenience, the centre should be at Cummins.

The Port Lincoln corporation is based on Port Lincoln, comprising most of the residential area of the city. Under the Minister's recommendations, an extension is granted, encompassing an area from Stinky Creek to Winter Hill. This will take in the residential area of Port Lincoln and Stanford and Boston, and ultimately it should encompass all the residential area. Most of the people will accept that as being satisfactory. However, many people have contacted me because they would prefer the boundaries to remain as they were.

Why should there be opposition to the recommendations? Most of the people who have sent letters of protest are concerned about the loss of community identity. They do not want to lose civic pride. They have built up their community and want to hang on to it. Another problem is that of distance. A council overseer has to supervise his men. Many overseers like to call on

their gangs twice a day, but this is sometimes impracticable. However, they like to call on their gangs at least once a day. If an area covers 13 400 square kilometres it is very difficult for an overseer to supervise the area.

The spread of noxious weeds must also be considered. The best implement in the world for spreading noxious weeds is the road grader. If one looks at any district council area one can almost see that noxious weeds have spread to the boundary of that council. If council areas are enlarged, weeds will be spread farther. This is a great problem, particularly for rural people who have been conscientious in trying to keep down the spread of noxious weeds. Any enlargement of areas will aggravate the problem. This may be considered by some people to be a small problem, but to landholders and those involved it is a serious one as eradicating noxious weeds has become one of the major expenses of primary producers. The practicalities of serving an area have been raised in relation to the size of the areas. Many people, when it is suggested that they are to be moved to the control of another area, say that the council in which they are at present situated is managed better than the one to which they are to be moved, and therefore they wish to remain. This may be a small matter that will be overcome with the passing of time, but it causes concern. Every letter that has been written to me states that the council qualifies under the minimum requirement of the commission, as it has a \$50 000 rate revenue, so they ask why the change is necessary.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You have had no letters supporting the recommendations of the Royal Commission?

Mr. BLACKER: I have received one letter only, from the corporation of Port Lincoln.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: How many in opposition?

Mr. BLACKER: I cannot say exactly, but it would be between 90 and 100.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: From councils?

Mr. BLACKER: No, from ratepayers. I could supply most of those letters, if the Minister wishes.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Fair enough.

Mr. BLACKER: Perhaps the views of many ratepayers could be summed up in a submission by Pastor Wittwer: his report, referring to community interests, states:

The report (page 46) states, "The local government areas (Cleve and Franklin Harbor) have much in common." No evidence is listed. I believe the following is the situation. Over 90 per cent of the ratepayers in the District Council of Franklin Harbor have their banking, commercial, schooling, religious, and recreational facilities at Cowell.

This situation could be applied to every council area in my district, because each one has a major town around which all facilities are placed. The report continues:

A study of the enrolment at Cowell Area School shows that 100 per cent of pupils reside within the District Council of Franklin Harbor area. Church rolls show that only two families listed live in the District Council of Cleve area, these two being members of a small group established only in Cowell. The lines are drawn equally clearly in business and sporting areas. Cowell is a growing tourist resort, and ratepayers are conscious of the potential of the tourist trade. Excerpts from newspaper reports of meetings of the District Council of Cleve can readily be supplied to indicate that many objections to updating tourist facilities are raised by ratepayers in the district of Cleve.

So, we have a polarisation of the districts. If an amalgamation is carried out, there will be two areas vying for supremacy, each trying to be the major centre and thus

having to share what is left. In many ways the Royal Commission has overlooked the size of district council areas in outlying districts, as it is the vastness of these areas that creates problems that are not so readily applicable to more closely settled areas. The District Council of Lincoln has an area of about 4 700 km<sup>2</sup> in which there is about 1 930 kilometres of road. This is a large area and to incorporate that with the area of Tumby Bay, of about 2 400 km<sup>2</sup>, would indeed be difficult, and it would be impracticable for an overseer to cover that area. When one considers the vastness of these areas, one would have to consider the chance of an overseer being able effectively to look after his men. It may be necessary for him to use a light aeroplane. Will workmen have caravans in which to camp, or will ratepayers have to pay them travelling allowances for morning and evening travel, less work thereby being done for the money paid? A suggestion by the Royal Commission, the reason for which escapes me, is that islands be brought under the control of councils. I do not know how a council would grade roads on islands, because it would be impossible.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Councils are required to do more than grade roads: they are not the road boards of the eighteenth century.

Mr. BLACKER: I appreciate that, but when people come to the mainland from islands they use council facilities, and how can a council grade roads on an island about 24 km off shore? The gentleman who owns it has to provide every facility at his own expense: he cannot get proper wharf facilities to load and unload the ketch, so there are problems involved, because this is a different set of circumstances.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It can still be rated.

Mr. BLACKER: Councils are involved in community affairs. I quote from *Saga of Wangaraleednie*, a publication which refers to Cowell and Cleve and which was recently released. It states:

Local government in the area has progressed steadily from 1888, with the formation of the District Council of Franklin Harbor, and the addition of the District Council of Cleve in 1911, to the present day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I draw the honourable member's attention to the time shown on the clock. The honourable member for Goyder.

Mr. BOUNDY (Goyder): Many speakers from both sides have expressed their views on this Bill, ranging from total acceptance to total hostility.

Mr. Chapman: Some members.

Mr. BOUNDY: Yes, some members. I express the views of the district I represent. It is a matter of history that more than half of the number of councils in this State called for a Royal Commission into council boundaries. The Commissioners were appointed, and the terms of reference were laid down. As all members are aware, \$500 000 was promoted as the viable rate revenue for a metropolitan council and \$50 000 as the base sum for a rural council. Many rural councils said that their identity was at risk.

Mr. Gunn: Are you going to vote for the Bill?

Mr. BOUNDY: Be patient. It would appear that the Commissioner of Highways changed the terms of reference because, on page 12 of the first report, \$150 000 appears to be the base sum for the rate revenue of rural councils. However, all members are aware of what happened after the first report was released. The result was that apathy in relation to local government was out. As such an uproar resulted, I suppose I could call it the wish of the people.

It has been said many times that local government ratepayers are apathetic, but I think that all members would agree that the will of the people was heard loud and clear. The Minister, after supporting the first report without reservation, wavered after mountains of letters, telegrams and petitions forced him to change his mind.

The Minister then asked the Commissioners to consider further submissions, and certain changes were made, even in my own district. Many arguments were promoted, only few of which were accepted. The Minlaton District Council, my own council, was reprieved because it proved its case. The ratepayers of the council, the residents of the area, and I are delighted that the Minister saw the justice of the case.

Mr. Rodda: That was just a sop.

Mr. BOUNDY: No, I assure the honourable member that it was not a sop. The district council's submission in relation to the second report proved that it had a valid case. Such was the delight of the officers of the council that its flag was flown at the mast head on the top of the council's chambers for two days, but I was not at home to see whether it had flown at half mast previously. That indicates the feeling of the residents of the district. The Bute District Council, part of which is in my district, and the Port Broughton District Council promoted a different recommendation from their original submission to the Commission. After stressing that their first and dearest wish was to remain as they were, they could see that their need to change could be proven. They, by discussion and consent, agreed to amalgamate. However, I stress that their first and dearest wish was to remain exactly as they were. Amalgamations have already taken place in my own area, by consent, over many years. I refer to the Maitland District Council, incorporating the corporation of the town. In days gone by, the Dalrymple District Council was divided between Minlaton and Yorketown, and the corporation of Edithburgh became part of the Yorketown District Council by consent.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: When was that?

Mr. BOUNDY: Many years ago.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: How many?

Mr. BOUNDY: That does not matter; that is not the point. It was within my memory; so, that puts it within the past 40 years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable Minister to cease interjecting and the honourable member to refrain from debating the matter with him, and to address his remarks to the Chair. The honourable member for Goyder.

Mr. BOUNDY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Councils in my own area have proved that they are willing, after discussion, to make changes where necessary.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Even if it takes 50 years?

Mr. BOUNDY: It does not take that long. It is that kind of voluntary discussion and decision that ought to be the basis for any change. The Commission's findings would not be wasted if they are used as a basis for voluntary negotiation. I have had strong approaches from many councils in the area that their identity be retained, and they have presented documented evidence that they are viable councils on economic grounds. The Warooka council, the Clinton council, and the Port Wakefield council all held strong and united meetings to ensure their continuation. These small councils operate to the complete satisfaction of their ratepayers and residents. Yorketown



and Maitland have no strong objection to the report, but their first wish, I believe, is to remain as they are, although the Owen council wishes to become part of the Balaklava District Council.

Parts of the Munno Para District Council, centred around Virginia, held meetings, wishing to be linked with the rural council of Mallala rather than be linked with the urban areas of Elizabeth. The member for Elizabeth, when speaking last evening, referred to the ward in the Munno Para District Council that had only 200 ratepayers, but he took no account of the objections of those members of council. He said that he supported the measure as it affected the council in his area. I believe that the Minister, in calling for these changes in local government, has completely lost sight of the functioning of that body. Its accessibility to the community it serves is vitally important. In rural areas, the social viability of the district centre is more important than are economic considerations. When evidence was being taken by the Commissioners for their first report, I gave evidence as a private citizen on the very point that we must ensure that the social viability of small district councils is retained, and that is more important than economic considerations.

Account must be taken of the great amount of development of and improvement made to sporting and tourist facilities by bodies outside local government which, in effect, are additional to rate revenue. I cite the example of the Port Vincent caravan park, run by the progress association, which receives fees of about \$15 000 a year, of which I believe it is able to plough back about \$5 000 a year into community improvements. This is part of the additional revenue small councils provide to the benefit of their community. Time and again the Minister has said that local government must stand on its own two feet, and amalgamations are supposed to achieve this.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: On whose foot do you suggest it should stand?

Mr. BOUNDY: I contend that money must be poured into local government from central and State sources, and amalgamations will not necessarily make its use more effective. I contend that every cent that local government receives from State and central sources is its own money, having been raised by means of fuel tax, registration fees, and road tax charges. The member for Heyssen is always concerned about the viability of our railway system. I notice that the Auditor-General in his report states that the Railways Department lost about \$40 000 000 last year.

Mr. Gunn: It was \$30 000 000.

Mr. BOUNDY: I thought it was \$40 000 000.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What's \$10 000 000 between friends?

Mr. BOUNDY: Most of the people in my district can make no use of the South Australian railway system, yet they subsidise the railways through the taxes they pay, and, therefore, a case exists for funds to be provided for local government bodies in my district. As there is no railway system in my district, and as extra use is made of the road network, with the attendant levies charged thereon, our contribution is higher in this field than that from other areas. Rural councils such as the Warooka council carry a heavy burden to promote tourism from their own funds, and this burden is heavier than it should be. Although grants may be made for tourist purposes on a \$1 for \$1 basis, that is not enough, because the Warooka district council area encompasses about 12 150 ha of national park, from which no rate revenue is received. According to the report, this council is not viable, but its viability is sapped because it is unable to obtain full revenue. Its viability

would be assisted if additional grants were made available for tourist purposes. I believe the Minister has denigrated the Commissioners. We have seen two reports published and we have seen each report promoted by the Minister as being the last word on boundary changes, yet we have seen 17 changes made by Cabinet decision.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's not true.

Mr. BOUNDY: That is the way I understand it. Now a Select Committee is to be established, further delaying the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. This political manoeuvring to which I have just referred points to only one thing: that local government is competent to decide its own future; this Government is not. Further, provision is contained in the Local Government Act for councils to seek change themselves.

Mr. McAnaney: How much did they change?

Mr. BOUNDY: Those councils which are satisfied with the recommendations already have the power available to implement the recommendations. I do not denigrate the work of the Commission; indeed, I believe that its report will prove to be an effective basis from which local government itself can make boundary alterations where desirable. Under the heading "General Observations—(1) The Future of Local Government", the Commissioners state:

It is important that we make our position quite clear. We believe in local government. We do not wish to see the transfer of powers to central government either by default of local government or design by central government. We do not wish to see the transfer of powers from local government to any *ad hoc* bodies specifically set up for a particular purpose. We believe that if it is strong and effective, and properly staffed, local government is the appropriate tier of government to carry out the tasks currently committed to it, and no doubt many others.

We believe that any further transfer of powers from local government, will tend to make it a hollow shell. In our view, it is pointless to have a tier of government set up with all the outward indicia of government, and little power. And we believe, following the submissions from councils, our hearing of evidence, our visits to councils, and our reading of submissions following our first report, that there is a real and ever present danger of this happening.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Why don't you read it all?

Mr. BOUNDY: I have read sufficient to support my views.

Mr. Millhouse: You can't even—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I appeal to all honourable members to refrain from interjecting. Interjections have been going across the Chamber during the past hour or so. Honourable members have been given a reasonable go, and I ask all members to give the honourable member for Goyder the opportunity to put his view to the House.

Mr. BOUNDY: No substantial evidence has yet been presented to indicate that the forced amalgamation of councils will prevent local government from becoming an empty shell. I refer to the editorial of *Local Government in South Australia*, the official journal of the Local Government Association of South Australia. It is clearly stated that the views expressed are the personal views of Mr. Frank Schmidt—

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Do you subscribe to them?

Mr. BOUNDY: I subscribe to some of the views and, for the benefit of the Minister, I refer to the editorial, as follows:

For local government to become strong and functional it must analyse its own shortcomings and produce its own remedies. It must become a government by negotiations and consent. Only then can it hope for a full working partnership within the Australian federal system.

The final paragraph of the editorial states:

Today's political efficiency can be measured by the degree of public discussion, negotiation and consent over all issues. Compulsion never produces entirely desired results. Neither is it likely to inspire any degree of voters' confidence in the governments exerting such compulsion. Negotiation and mutual consent are vital to producing a compact acceptable to the large majority of citizens and ratepayers.

I could not agree more with that statement, and for these reasons I cannot support the second reading of this Bill, or the appointment of a Select Committee. Indeed, I oppose any changes that do not have the approval of the people involved in the areas concerned.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I oppose this Bill. I am concerned about the attitude of the Minister. I have watched him during this debate, and I can see that we are wasting our time even debating the matter. Perhaps the Minister is interested from the point of view of entertainment, but he is certainly not listening to the details presented in this debate in an attempt fully to consider them. I do not believe that the Minister intends to take any action on any of the points raised. For this reason, I am concerned about his attitude. Other honourable members have referred to the history of this situation. Reference has been made to the reaction of councils throughout South Australia as a result of the first report of the Commission, and reference has also been made to the precarious position in which Government members were placed.

Generally, the people of South Australia thought that the Government had had enough and would forget about the report, thinking, that by the time of the next election, the people would have forgotten about the matter. However, by the time the second report was made it was clear that, for those members of the Government who were placed in difficult positions over the recommendations, the Minister had backed down to the extent of reprieving certain areas, and he is proceeding with this Bill to enforce the remainder of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on councils in other parts of South Australia. I am amazed to read the Minister's comments in his second reading explanation. He is one who is always so concerned about the will of the people but, when the people in this case voice their disapproval of the situation, he condemns them left, right and centre, and says:

I urge members to deliberate seriously on these matters, placing the interests of local government as a whole above those of sectional groups which may have a vested interest in preserving the *status quo*. I think every member will agree that local government is a very desirable and, indeed, essential form of government.

So the people are the aspect of the situation we are discussing this evening. In introducing the Bill, the Minister said:

I introduce this Bill in the belief that the recommendations made in the two reports of the Commission were correct ....

He says they were correct, but what does he do? First, he lets 17 district councils out of the clutches of the report and then proceeds, as he states in his second reading explanation:

... and were necessary and appropriate for the strengthening of local government as the third tier of government in this State. However, it has become increasingly clear that opposition whipped up by some sections of the community ...

The people, he seems to believe, should not be able to express themselves as they have done. He is one who has indicated that the people, not necessarily organisations, are his concern. He states:

Opposition whipped up by some sections of the community may well have destroyed the whole of the Commission's report and, in the interests of local government, I do not think we can afford to let that happen.

It is surprising, when we look back on the whole situation, to find how, when one gets on the wrong road and proceeds along it, one gets into great difficulties. That is the situation confronting us at present. The Highways Department has been built up into a big concern, and that has taken away from local government work that it could very well have carried out. I suppose on paper it would appear to be a good exercise to build up the Highways Department so that it could build roads throughout the State, but what do we find today? We find the cost of the immense manpower and of machinery so great that, by the time machinery is paid for and everyone gets his wages, there is not much money left for the work of constructing roads throughout the State; so at present the roads in this State have never been worse. I asked the Minister in the House whether he was aware of the deterioration of the roads in the State at present. What did the Minister say? In clear tones he said "Yes", but he did not say what he was going to do about it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You didn't ask me that.

Mr. VENNING: I did not want to embarrass the Minister, because he would not have had a reply to my question. He has not the wherewithal to arrest the situation and to correct the deterioration of the main roads of the State.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You did not want to ask the question.

Mr. VENNING: This is the sad aspect of the whole situation, that after the aspect of building up the Highways Department with the monstrosity we see at Walkerville, if we had followed a different course, I believe we would not be facing the problems we have today; we would have had decentralisation, and councils would have been able to handle the situation much better than it is being handled by the big set-up we have today. It would appear to be the right thing to have been done.

*Members interjecting:*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections across the Chamber. I ask honourable members to show a little decorum here. I call on the member for Rocky River to address the Chair and not members on either side of the Chamber.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member for Rocky River has spent some time referring in his comments to "the monstrosity at Walkerville", which is a slur on the Highways Department and really is not related to this Bill. However, as he has made that charge against the Highways Department, may I have your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I reply to the debate, to deal adequately with the slander on the efficient Highways Department?

Mr. Gunn: You are out of order.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The honourable member's remarks were out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point taken by the Minister is not a point of order. I ask the member for Rocky River to confine himself to the local government issue and not indulge in referring to outside matters.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I rise on a point of order. In view of your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you will not permit me to deal with the slanderous statement made by the member for Rocky River about the Highways Department—

Mr. VENNING: On a point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not know that I gave that ruling but, if the ruling I give is the ruling at the moment, I am ruling that there was no point of order in the matter raised by the Minister.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: And you will permit me to deal with it in reply?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Rocky River not to pursue that line.

Mr. Dean Brown: You can hand it out but you can't take it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: I will give it back to you, too, you dirty little bastard.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister has just referred to me as a bastard.

Mr. CRIMES: On a point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member must resume his seat. The honourable member for Rocky River.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I ask the Minister to withdraw that remark, as it is unparliamentary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member repeat the remark that he objects to?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Yes; the remark was "dirty little bastard".

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You seem to think it is a joke.

Mr. Crimes: What are you laughing about?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If such a remark was made, would the Minister be prepared to withdraw that remark?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As the honourable member is saying that the remark was made, what were the circumstances?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Minister withdraw the remark he made?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the honourable member objects to the term, I assume he would withdraw the original objectionable remark he made. If he will do that, I shall be happy to do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to withdraw the remark he made.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In deference to you, Sir, I will do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member for Rocky River.

Mr. VENNING: On a point of order, Sir, as about five minutes of my valuable time has been wasted, I ask—

*Members interjecting:*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have already asked honourable members to maintain decorum in this debate, and I again ask them to do so. Otherwise, I will have to take certain action.

Mr. VENNING: I hope I am allowed an extra five minutes to speak in order to make up for the time that the Minister has wasted. Having referred to the building at Walkerville, I point out that, when one proceeds along the wrong track, it is interesting to see into how much trouble one gets. This is the situation with the Government, and highways and local government matters, including the matter of road maintenance charges, are all tied in with my remarks. This is one of the problems that has developed and, having got on to the wrong track, we have now reached the point of no return and are confronted with this situation.

I refer now to my own district, only two councils in which have not expressed concern about the Royal Commission's report. The Royal Commission recommended that the Crystal Brook area should be included in the Gladstone, Laura and Georgetown areas. A recent meeting of the Georgetown District Council moved to accept, with regret, the Royal Commission's recommendations. However, the people of Georgetown do not want Crystal Brook included because of the range which tends to sever Crystal Brook from Laura, Gladstone and Georgetown. Not because it is my home town, but because of its importance (the Highways Department and the Engineering and Water Supply Department have their headquarters there), I think Crystal Brook should be left as it is.

Having contacted the people of Red Hill, I know that they are totally opposed to the Royal Commission's recommendations, not wanting their area amalgamated with Snowtown. I refer also to the Spalding area, which has an efficient council. One needs merely to go to this area to see how viable the council is, how well it is organised, and how well it has spent its rural grants. Indeed, it has spent its money wisely and well, and much credit must be given to the people of Spalding for the way in which the township has been preserved and its identity retained. It would be a shame if this township lost its identity and had to amalgamate with Clare. Having held a meeting, the ratepayers of Spalding oppose any change to the *status quo*.

The Wilmington District Council, at the top end of Rocky River District, is also opposed to the findings of the Royal Commission, believing that it should retain its identity. This is an important part of the State in relation to tourism, and will be even more important as a residential area for the people who will work at the proposed Redcliff project if it is established. I therefore agree that Wilmington should be retained, as I believe this area will develop and grow. It will certainly be a viable proposition in future if the Redcliff project proceeds.

The ratepayers of the Port Germein District Council are also opposed to the Royal Commission's recommendations, believing that their council area should be retained as it is at present. The Royal Commission recommended that a portion of the council area on the coastal side of the range become part of the Port Pirie District Council. However, the people of Port Germein believe the council area should be retained in its present state. The Royal Commission did not recommend that the whole of the area on that side of the range be transferred to the Port Pirie council area, but it is considered that if Port Germein services part of the area it should service the whole of it.

My colleagues have referred to the Bute and Port Broughton District Councils, which got together after the first report of the Royal Commission was published and agreed on a better scheme than that recommended by the Royal Commission: Bute was to become part of the Wallaroo area and Port Broughton would become part of the area comprising Red Hill and Snowtown. The Royal Commission in its second report agreed that those two areas should amalgamate. Having spoken to the people of Port Broughton, I know that, although they are reasonably pleased with what has been achieved to date, they would prefer, if this Bill does not eventually pass, to have their council remain as an individual entity.

The people of Carrieton, which is at the northern end of my district, are concerned that, if the district council loses its identity, it will mean an end to this small town. True, this council depends on debit orders for its sustenance, but what of it? It maintains the roads in the

area with the money that is made available to it and, for this reason, the council is doing the job more cheaply than it could be done if it was to amalgamate with Orroroo. Carrieton is a historic area of the State, the people of which would be able to carry on their activities as they have in the past if the present situation was not changed. I do not see why they should succumb to the Royal Commission's recommendations, particularly in the light of information that one is able to glean from time to time. It is not expected that amalgamations of councils will save the Government money, and for this reason I believe that, with others, this council should be able to retain its identity.

There have been no take-overs in the Jamestown area, although that town's corporation and the district council have mutually agreed to amalgamate. This is one of the few areas in my district from which people have not expressed concern about the Commission's report. Like my colleagues, I have received correspondence from other councils throughout the State. I have even received a letter from the Henley and Grange council expressing its concern about the report. I have also received a letter from the Meadows council, in the Heysen District, which is circularising members of Parliament in order to get across its point of view. This letter states:

*Re letter from Minister re Boundaries Commission—*  
Questions to be answered:

1. Why, in the light of the Commission's second report, have so many modifications been made to boundaries?
2. The Secretary to the Commission has already advised that the modifications outlined by the Minister were not recommended by the Commissioners.
3. Why has no communication been circulated to councils giving further reasoning for retention of some boundaries and not of others?
4. As the Commission has not made a third report, on what basis were the recommendations over-ridden by the Government?
5. If this has been decided by officers of the Local Government Department and the Minister, is it intended to publish their reasons why some resubmissions have been accepted and others rejected?

I hope that, in his reply to this debate, the Minister will answer those questions. I am sorry that there was such a disturbance during my speech, with the Minister becoming upset.

Mr. Mathwin: He blotted his copybook.

Mr. VENNING: Yes, he made a statement that he later retracted. People in rural communities are concerned that this scheme is to be forced on them. The population of these communities is small and scattered. In Brighton, for instance, with the weight of numbers and pressure able to be exerted on a Minister, something was able to be done. However, in sparsely populated country areas, there are not the numbers to achieve success in that way. No matter what the question, these days numbers count. In rural areas, the numbers are becoming fewer, and Governments are now aware of where the votes are. Although I disagree with this legislation, I think I will support its going to a Select Committee as this will enable councillors and ratepayers in my district to state their views, as I believe many of them will do.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): It is difficult for a member to decide what to do about a Bill such as this, as he must measure what is best for his district against what is best for the State. This sorts out the politician from the statesman, and we have not had too many statesmen speaking so far in this debate. The last distribution of

council boundaries took place about 40 years ago at a time when many councils were set up in small areas. As they did not require much equipment, they were successful.

Mr. Venning: That's true.

Mr. McANANEY: Yes, at a certain stage of development. In those small areas, they worked successfully, but the time came when a change was necessary. Much amalgamation was needed, but people opposed it. Nevertheless, it had to come, as activity in an area increased. I became a councillor at a time when the administration charges took up half of the revenue of the council. Our grader had been pulled out of Darwin Harbor, and we had three old horse-drawn rollers. When a new assessment was proposed, the ratepayers opposed it at a meeting attended by 200 people (practically everyone in the district).

They were unwilling to accept the new assessment. As Chairman, I attended the meeting along with one other councillor. We put the case for the council; the other seven councillors did not even talk to the people. Half-way through the meeting someone said "We'll throw out the council and get a new one." I said, "That's the first sensible thing said this evening." I was re-elected by a three-to-one majority; the other councillor who had been present at the meeting was re-elected unopposed; and most of the other councillors were not re-elected. A man who vehemently opposed the new assessment at that meeting and said he did not want development is now Chairman of the council, and he is increasing rates at a faster pace than we ever thought of. We must move with the times, although I do not wish to say what constitutes development. If a member is too parochial, he should get out of Parliament. A member should represent his area, but he must remember that there is a middle course. In that position, one can be shot at from both sides, but one comes out on top, while others are submerged in the little ruts into which they have fallen.

The stage was reached when the old Act was not working. There were few amalgamations when amalgamations were necessary. Ratepayers in council areas would not vote in favour of joining a corporation, as they were paying lower rates and were using the corporation's swimming pools, libraries, and so on. This is what happened at Strathalbyn; no-one wanted amalgamation. The corporation had put in a swimming pool without asking council approval. When the corporation got into trouble and asked for help, help was not forthcoming.

When the Strathalbyn corporation called a meeting to see whether the people wanted amalgamation, as now suggested, only five people attended the meeting; two councillors attended, but I do not know where the other councillors were. So, in many cases this redistribution had to take place. I think the Royal Commission went too far in respect of the number of reductions. The Minister thought it would be better to have 40 or perhaps 20 or even 10 councils. If the Royal Commission had suggested 100, it would have been fairly good. It reduced it to 72, which was too many, and now it has increased it to 90, and made a hell of a mess of it.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It is only 88.

Mr. McANANEY: That is worse than I thought. Evidently, a map was picked up and a little place around Kensington Gardens was selected. I draw attention to the area around Happy Valley that is to be tacked on to Christies Beach. I hope the Minister can say why he has done it. The Royal Commission did not do too bad a job until the Minister interfered. What was the cause of it? No-one yet knows the answer. A decision must be made as to whether we go back to the shocking old set-up or

whether we go to the other extreme, where areas are disproportionate. We need to develop something that is good and necessary for South Australia. Of the six councils involved in my own electoral district, four are happy, because they have been given additional territory. I do not know of one meeting or one letter from those areas saying that they are not happy. The Strathalbyn District Council and the Strathalbyn corporation have been joined together. The Mount Barker council will have additional territory, and it is therefore happy. The Onkaparinga council is happy because it is getting additional territory. The only objection I have heard is that an area being taken over has far too many noxious weeds, as a result of faults of the Agriculture Department over the years. Liberal and Labor Ministers of Agriculture did not ensure that councils carried out their obligations under the Weeds Act. Now, there is one hell of a mess in the Hills. The East Torrens District Council is a very good council with a sincere Chairman and councillors.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: I think you are biased.

Mr. McANANEY: I criticise when I think criticism is due. Part of the Adelaide suburban area is in East Torrens. I would like to see the East Torrens District Council stay as it is, and I believe that that is the wish of most of the residents there. I have been to meetings and presented a petition signed by many people. If it is not possible to allow the East Torrens District Council to stay as it is, the suburban part should be added to the metropolitan area and the country part should be added to a country council. People in the rural part want to remain in a country council area. Some of the people living at Montacute went there because they wanted to be in a country area and to be served by a country council. The Minister said that if a person uses a bank in a town, he has an interest in that town. Does a person have an interest in a place simply because he goes to a supermarket there? The Ashton co-operative is in a metropolitan council area; this must be corrected by the Select Committee. What interest have the people of Campbelltown in the Norton Summit Emergency Fire Services? How can the E.F.S. operate with two council areas split in half?

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Are you going to support the setting up of a Select Committee?

Mr. McANANEY: I am going to support the second reading and the third reading if some adjustments are made. I hope the three Labor Party members of the Select Committee will not say "No" to everything: I hope they will be willing to accept what is in the interests of the people. Someone showed me an aerial photograph and asked, "Where would a schoolchild put the boundary?" The boundary was not where the Commissioners put it.

Mr. Duncan: Why did they ask you?

Mr. McANANEY: At 60 years of age, I am still learning. However, the honourable member is not learning now, so he will not be learning at 60 years of age. The District Council of Meadows, in my district, has been slaughtered more than any other council has been: I think it has been divided into seven parts. That council is viable although it is in a country area, and its rate revenue is more than \$500 000. I believe that no council with a rate revenue of less than \$50 000 is a viable proposition, because administration costs would be too high. There may be exceptions in outlying areas where costs may be lower. The Meadows council has had problems particularly with regard to newly developing areas, but I am sure that the Marion council had plenty of problems 20 to 30 years ago when its area was developing. The Meadows council has gone through

this situation, admittedly with a few problems, but it has been successful.

The Minister should indicate why he considered it necessary to make the changes to the Meadows council area. With subdividers being responsible to construct roads in developing areas, councils do not have so many problems. I cannot understand how the Commissioners could suggest amalgamating the Christies Beach area with the western part of the Meadows council area. The Christies Beach area has developed rapidly. The area near Happy Valley reservoir is now developing rapidly. Eventually, that area will warrant its own council. This is a particular type of area with an environment similar to that on the coastal plains. A council such as Kensington and Norwood, which has a static population and cannot develop further, should control a larger area than would apply in a newly developing area such as Christies Beach, the area near Happy Valley reservoir, or that part of the area in the Meadows council district. The Select Committee should consider this aspect.

I will stick my neck out because a representative of the Meadows council is present in the gallery. If I lived in Meadows, I think I would be better off if I were attached to the Strathalbyn council, rather than attached to a suburban council. I would prefer to live in a council area that was developing at the same rate, so that there would be the same influence in the council. That is my opinion, but people living in these areas should have some say in what is to be done. Only two people have written to me with regard to boundaries in the Meadows area, but members of the E.F.S. will be upset if the Meadows council area is divided. That organisation provides a splendid service, and it would be a pity if the situation were changed. The people living in the Meadows council area must put a case before the Select Committee. I am sure that there had to be a redistribution, but it is a pity that it has been taken as far as it has been taken in reducing the number of councils.

About 100 councils would be a more serviceable proposition, but councils must not be too small. Although people do not like change, if this legislation is passed I think within 12 months people will be happy with the situation, except for those in a few areas. We have to decide whether this Bill will pass in its amended form or whether the Select Committee will remove the anomalies it contains. Some of the smaller city councils would be better off if they were enlarged, but I cannot understand why a viable council like the District Council of Meadows should be destroyed.

Mr. Becker: What about Henley Beach?

Mr. McANANEY: I do not know about that situation, but I think the Minister should explain why this council is not being retained. To me, it would be tragic if we kept to the old boundaries without some changes. The suggestion by one or two members was, "All right, let those councils change that want to change and wait for the others to make up their minds." To me, one thing sticks out, and I have said this from the start: if there is to be a redistribution of boundaries, it must be done quickly. We must not let local government go for two or three years with their staffs not knowing what is to be their future, because that would be tragic. If the staffs were let go, they would have to be built up again. I support the idea of referring the Bill to a Select Committee, because some changes must be made. The committee should get on with its job as quickly as possible and make a final decision soon, otherwise local government will suffer considerably.

I have been somewhat outspoken on how I see the situation. Let us forget our parochial attitudes and consider what we think is the best solution. I asked a Liberal

candidate who was standing for preselection in my district, "If you are elected, will you do your homework, make a decision, and go out and try to sell your ideas to your constituents; or will you make your decision on what you think your constituents want?" The kind of member we want in this House is the one who does his homework, comes to a decision, and tries to sell it to his constituents. Then, if his constituents say, "No", his neck is on the chopping block, or the people go along with the ideas of their member. Parliament will not work as it should if members consider only what happens in their own little backyard. That applies particularly to the trade unions, which tell every Government member what he should do. Let us decide what is best for South Australia in the redistribution of boundaries, and do the best we can.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): As usual, the Minister seems to be in a somewhat peculiar frame of mind this evening and has made certain allegations, but we are discussing local government boundaries, which is a matter of great importance to the future welfare of the people of the State. When we consider such matters, we must consider not only the effects on our own district, but also the overall effects on and benefits to the people of the State as a whole. The Royal Commission's two reports have attracted considerable public interest and discussion throughout the community. I think that, during the time I have been a member, the Commission's first report has probably attracted more informed discussion and comment throughout the community than any other issue that has been brought to my attention. This has proved that the people of South Australia are concerned about local government, that they desire local government, and that they desire local government which is truly local and which looks after the local needs of the community, whether it be in the metropolitan area or in the country. I support the second reading of the Bill, and I sincerely hope that, when the measure is referred to a Select Committee, as I am sure it will be—

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You'll support the second reading?

Mr. GUNN: Yes and—

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Congratulations!

Mr. GUNN: —it will be given the proper consideration it deserves. When the first report was made available, I would not have supported it until the Minister, or whoever was responsible for redrafting the boundaries, had drawn them in the form in which they appear in the Bill now before us. I believe that the way the boundaries were originally drawn in the Flinders District was completely unreasonable and impracticable. Together with the member for Flinders, I attended a well attended and well organised meeting at Cummins, at which much public concern was expressed. The submissions made by the people who attended that meeting were well founded. Those people attending exercised their proper democratic right in expressing their views. Any person familiar with the area who would agree to amalgamate the Tumby Bay District Council and the Port Lincoln District Council into one large district council (it would be one of the largest in Australia, I believe) would be irresponsible. In his second reading explanation, the Minister made certain interesting comments. In his opening paragraph, he said:

The changes proposed are in accordance with the reports of the Royal Commission which have already been laid before the House, together with some modifications which are outlined in the schedule to the Bill.

However, I and other members of the community would like to know who was responsible for the modifications to the report. Was it done out of political consideration or with the idea of the welfare of local government in mind?

I think one can only conclude that the modifications were made not out of concern for local government but with a political bias. I believe that the Minister was fully aware that, if the Government did not alter certain council boundaries that had been recommended by the Commission, it would suffer electorally. For instance, the Government believed that, if it endorsed the Commission's recommendations as to local government boundaries in the Brighton district, the Minister of Education would probably be defeated. One can only conclude that in this regard the Minister of Local Government was directed by Cabinet, out of the sheer political consideration that the Government was frightened of the electoral consequences if it continued with the boundaries as originally drawn by the Royal Commission. If one looks at some other districts where Labor members are not in danger, one can only conclude that the Government was not concerned about the people in those areas.

Mr. Max Brown: Doesn't Whyalla knock that theory sky high?

Mr. Simmons: What about Peake?

Mr. GUNN: The member for Peake may contribute to the debate any time he wishes and so may the member for Whyalla. The member for Whyalla made what I consider to be one of the worst speeches in this debate, and I should be ashamed to have made such a foolish and irresponsible speech. He referred to the people of Tumby Bay as reactionaries and conservatives. However, I happened to be in that area yesterday and found that the people there were no different from people elsewhere in the State. They are fine, upstanding citizens. The honourable member cast a slur on the characters of those people and, if he were a responsible member, he would apologise to them for his irresponsible allegations against them. The suggestion he made has been completely refuted by the member for Flinders. The member for Whyalla, who cannot see beyond Whyalla, has no regard for the people of Eyre Peninsula as a whole.

Mr. Max Brown: Why don't you get back on the track?

*Members interjecting:*

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Eyre.

Mr. GUNN: I think I have dealt satisfactorily with the member for Whyalla, but it will be interesting to see whether the honourable member will retract any of his nonsensical remarks during the Committee stages.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should get back to the Bill.

Mr. GUNN: I sincerely hope the member for Whyalla will retract his earlier remarks. There are five district councils in my district: the District Council of Murat Bay, the District Council of Elliston, the District Council of Streaky Bay (on which I was proud to serve for four years), the District Council of Kimba, and the District Council of LeHunte, as well as part of the District Council of Cleve. The only council area in my district to be affected by the recommendations of the Commission was a small area comprising part of the Cleve council area, which was to be controlled in future by the Elliston council, but that arrangement has been changed by the political decision of the Government to redraw the boundaries.

In the second report, the Commission went to some lengths to stress its belief in the future of local government. Certainly, I hope that all members share that belief. I believe that, if local government is to continue as an effective local administrative entity, it will have to receive proper consideration, encouragement, and assistance from the State Government.

Mr. Max Brown: Don't you think it does now?

Mr. GUNN: No, I do not. Only this afternoon I raised in this House a matter concerning my district. In considering the problem with which the member for Flinders and I have been confronted, I believe it is clear that local government authorities on Eyre Peninsula have been blatantly discriminated against to the extent of about \$200 000, in the light of grants made to local councils in other parts of the State. If this trend continues, local councils will not be able to function and perform the duties expected by residents in their areas. I believe the Minister has virtually stabbed certain local councils in the back, because some councils will find it virtually impossible to maintain their work force.

Mr. Simmons: Weren't you listening today?

Mr. GUNN: I was listening and I was not at all satisfied with the answer I received from the Minister, and I could give another example, if the member for Peake would like it. This Government, which has claimed to have carried out so many marvellous feats on behalf of the people of South Australia, has commenced to build a highway in my district. The development of this highway affects many people in several council areas, yet the Government has decided to provide only \$100 000 this year for the construction of Flinders Highway. Although the Government has spent hundreds of thousands to reach a certain stage in this project, it now intends to leave the road in an unfinished state and will provide sufficient funds only for the Highways Department to maintain the highway.

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

Mr. GUNN: These comments are relevant to my constituents.

The SPEAKER: Order! They are not relevant to the matter now before the Chair.

Mr. GUNN: I will not pursue that matter further. I was pleased to see that the Commission did not recommend the creation of regional councils in South Australia. That is a significant step although, of course, it completely contradicts stated Australian Labor Party policy.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: How come?

Mr. GUNN: If the Prime Minister does not speak for the Labor Party, I certainly do not know who speaks for it. If the Minister wants to publicly disagree with the Prime Minister, I shall not stop him.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Whom does he speak for?

Mr. GUNN: The Commission states:

We do not recommend the formation of compulsory regional councils.

That is a significant statement which should hearten local government throughout South Australia, and I sincerely hope that that recommendation will be circulated and made available to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Simmons: What has the Bill to do with that?

Mr. GUNN: The Bill has nothing to do with that but, in dealing with this Bill, surely one can refer to the report of the Royal Commission, whose recommendations, in part, are sought to be put into effect through the Bill, although not all of them are incorporated in this Bill. If I am not satisfied with the recommendations of the Commission, or with the report of the Select Committee, I will not support the Bill. Certainly, if the Select Committee is not given the opportunity by the Minister to fulfil its proper function, I shall reserve my right to vote against the third reading of the Bill. I have nothing but the highest regard for the three Commissioners—

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Congratulations! You're the first member on your side to say that.

Mr. GUNN: The Commissioners went about their duties in a way all members should commend. They had a difficult task to perform, and their terms of reference were regarded by certain people as being somewhat restrictive. Although I will not canvass this matter now, I believe the Minister made an error of judgment in placing a member of his department on the Commission. Indeed, this matter has been referred to at several public meetings and it has been raised in other discussions I have had on this matter.

Mr. Payne: That is a backhanded way of paying a compliment. You congratulate the Commission for doing a good job and then you say that one of the members should not have been on the Commission.

Mr. GUNN: I am interested to have that interjection from the member for Mitchell, who is the Country Party candidate selector. Members may not be aware that the honourable member has asked a constituent of mine to stand for the Country Party and has indicated that finance would be no problem. In reply to the honourable member, I may say that I stand entirely by what I said about the Commission.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You said an officer of my department should not have been on the Commission. I completely refute your view on that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GUNN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the person the Minister referred to reads what I have to say. My statement is somewhat different in its implication from the interpretation the Minister has tried to put on it. I maintain that the Minister erred in putting someone from his own office on the Royal Commission, and I leave it there. This matter is far too important to allow the Minister to sidetrack me or other members. The only reason the Minister or the Government agreed to alter the original report of the Royal Commission (which was, in my opinion, unsatisfactory) was out of sheer political consideration, and it is not the first time the Government has changed its mind for fear of political defeat.

We would have seen the Minister introduce a Bill to set up 72 local government bodies in this State instead of the 88 local government bodies provided for in the Bill. With those few remarks, I support this Bill to the second reading stage, while reserving my judgment and my final decision on the third reading until the Select Committee has reported.

Mr. CRIMES (Spence): I support the second reading of the Bill and express my appreciation of the fact that there is to be a Select Committee to give people the opportunity further to express their opinions of the recommendations made in the reports that have been brought down. We should look at this matter in its full perspective. Is it not logical, in looking at local government and whether or not the boundaries should be altered, that people of independent minds should be examining the matter: in other words, looking from the outside in? We need people of this type who can assess what is best for the State collectively. In saying that, I am in no way denigrating the value of useful and viable local government in South Australia. We must face up to the need for viable local government and local government of true value to the people in the various areas of the State. I believe it is completely logical that, with councils set up in the dim, dark and distant days and existing fairly well as little empires on their own, we should find the people associated with those councils of a mind to continue their existence as long as humanly possible, irrespective of whether or not they are of real value to the people of the State. In other

words, they get a proprietary interest in their own little proprietary concerns; they get an interest in something they come to regard as traditional as a section of local government in South Australia.

Why is it that members opposite, by and large, are so interested in maintaining fragmentation not only in local government but also in State Government and Commonwealth Government areas? We have noted time and time again the remarks by members of the Opposition about any form of government: they always desire that it remain small and ineffective. The reason they do this is that they believe completely in a certain type of economy, not only in local government, not only in State Government, but also in Commonwealth Government. They believe in a market economy, that the market is more important than human beings. They believe, too, that, the more councils there are, the bigger the market there is for those business people who want to sell their wares to the various councils. That is why we have, in local government, enterprises in close proximity to each other, with duplication of plant, equipment, office staff and office equipment, etc., when it is total unnecessary. The reason is that they want those business friends to have sales to this multiplicity of councils. It is typical of our opponents that they should put this point first and foremost before all else.

When we see their attitude towards Commonwealth Government, we find that they favour State Government; when we look at their attitude towards State Government, we find they favour local government; and all the time it is down to tinier and tinier proportions and more and more fragmentation. This is the motivation and the method behind the arguments on this matter expressed by our opponents. Time and time again, we hear expressions of regard for the views of the people, but on the question of local government there are the individuals who would deny full franchise to the people who live in local government areas. So how hypocritical, how stupid can they be when they talk about democracy in local government areas and the will of the people? I could not imagine anything more fantastic than their protestations in this regard.

Then we hear about the petitions that have been presented, ostensibly reflecting the views of people in certain local government areas, begging that those areas be maintained, against the recommendations of a responsible and fully respectable Commission. We know what happens in regard to petitions: a person, often of some standing in the community and well known, will go around with a petition to be signed, walk up to a person and say, "How about signing this?" We do not know what arguments are presented to the person asked to sign that petition, but we can well guess that often the argument is this: "We want to maintain our council. If we do not our rates will be increased." When that is suggested and when the hip pocket nerve is touched, we can guarantee that the pen will come out of the pocket quickly and the petition will be signed quick smart.

I turn now to local councils. How often is it that a member of Parliament receives a complaint and discovers it is not a complaint to do with his constituency? The member of Parliament, whether Commonwealth or State, discovers time after time (and this has been my experience) that the complaint is a local government complaint.

Mr. Simmons: I should say more than half the time.

Mr. CRIMES: Yes; that is perfectly true. When we ask, "Have you been in touch with your local council; have you telephoned your local council office?" the person says, "No; I did not know it was a council matter."

Further to that, the member may ask, "Have you had a talk with your local councillor, with one of your ward councillors or aidermen?" Time after time the member gets the response, "I don't even know who he is." In view of these facts, how can it be claimed that local government is, in truth, so very close to the feelings of the people in the local government areas? We can readily admit that a multiplicity of councils is suitable in certain circumstances, but those circumstances have long passed since the horse and buggy age. We must realise, as is being realised to a large extent in the reports of Royal Commissioners, that we live in the 1970's and not in the 1900's, when the horse and buggy was the usual means of transport. Although we can travel from one part of the State to another at high speeds, and methods of communicating by telegraph, telephone, radio, and so on have improved to such an extent, we are still asked to stay in the horse and buggy age.

Councils need not remain so small and unviable, as many of them are today. The Royal Commission's recommendations are completely logical and reasonable considering the times in which we live. I refer to the horrifying description of the Highways Department, given by the member for Rocky River. All members, however, should be tremendously proud of that department. Having visited the department about 12 or 18 months ago, some members realise the work that the department does and the research it carries out, on which it should be congratulated. The department is headed by a magnificent leader (Mr. Keith Johinke), and I defy any Opposition member to say that he does not respect Mr. Johinke and the magnificent work being done by his department.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Have a look at the Auditor-General's Report, and you will not be so enthusiastic about his department.

Mr. CRIMES: Opposition members would not be willing to say such things to Mr. Johinke's face.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Many members opposite don't respect him.

Mr. Gunn: That's untrue.

Mr. CRIMES: I do not want to be critical, and I hope it is untrue. The Highways Department, under the leadership of Mr. Johinke, is doing a magnificent job for the people of South Australia and is building a road system for their benefit and that of business interests in this State, in whom the Opposition members are always so tremendously interested. They talk about centralisation, but they should compare the achievements of the Highways Department, which is centralised and which has depots spread throughout the State, with the efforts of some of the small councils that the Royal Commission, in its wisdom, has recommended should go out of existence.

Mr. Venning: The Minister knows full well—

Mr. CRIMES: I ask the member for Rocky River, if he wants to have a go at someone, to ignore the Minister and have a go at me. Every time Opposition members attack the Minister, they succeed only in cementing all the more solidly the support of Government members for him. Can opponents of this Bill (that is, Opposition members) explain why, when local government elections are held, it is frequently difficult to find persons willing to stand as candidates for the positions offering? This has happened in Hindmarsh, part of which I represent. I know that an effort had to be made there to get candidates to stand for election.

Mr. Gunn: A.L.P. members!

Mr. CRIMES: Not A.L.P. members, and I give the lie to the statement that endorsed A.L.P. candidates stand for council elections.



Mr. Gunn: They do.

Mr. CRIMES: They do not; that is not part and parcel of the A.L.P. platform.

Mr. Goldsworthy: How do you know they don't?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Kavel must not totally disregard the Chair and its authority. He knows what Standing Orders provide.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You sound almost convincing.

Mr. CRIMES: I thank the member for Kavel for a rather gentle compliment, which I value very much.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I said "almost".

Mr. CRIMES: In the next local government election one will find no more interest being taken than has been taken in the past, even though these recommendations have been made by the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas.

Mr. Becker: What you said is utter rubbish. You endorse candidates left, right and centre.

Mr. CRIMES: The A.L.P. does not endorse candidates, be they from the left, right or centre, for council elections. In any event, the right would be completely outside the interests of the A.L.P., and would be more in line with the requirements of the member for Hanson.

Mr. Harrison: There haven't been any endorsed Labor candidates since 1952.

Mr. CRIMES: Opposition members refuse to accept the facts of life regarding local government which are always recorded in the figures that are revealed when polls are held periodically for the election of councillors, aldermen and mayors. We know that, practically every time an election occurs, the Minister of Local Government has to appeal to ratepayers, occupiers, and their spouses to vote. But do they go and vote? Only a few of them do, and it will be no different in future. This is a fair representation, recorded in facts and figures, of the sort of will of the people that the Opposition relates to local government.

Mr. Chapman: Don't you uphold the will of the people?

Mr. CRIMES: Of course I do, and I should like to see them vote. However, it is obvious, as they do not vote, that they do not share the honourable member's interest in local government. Admittedly, an interest is occasionally shown in local government elections, but this happens only when assets or rates have been increased. How often does one see active progress associations in operation? Now and again, and that is all! The interest in local government ebbs and flows, as I have seen it do. People take up an issue now and again, and that is all. The member for Flinders has expressed the fear that ratepayers will become numbers instead of persons. As so few people in council areas know who their aldermen and councillors are, I suggest that those aldermen and councillors are just not regarded as people anyway by most council electors. The Commission's second report states that its recommendations should strengthen the partnership between the State Government and local government, and that is what we all hope they will do. However, if we are to have strong relationships, surely they will be of greater strength if they are between the State Government and viable and efficient councils rather than weak and unviable councils. I think that is a logical claim.

Mr. Chapman: Do you think that the larger they are the more economical they will be?

Mr. CRIMES: The fewer councils there are the more economical they will be, as their costs will not be so high.

Mr. Chapman: Poppycock!

Mr. CRIMES: As there will not be so many councils, they will not have to buy so much plant and equipment,

with machinery being able to be used more generally and efficiently. The member for Rocky River has said that councils, especially in country areas, are of value with regard to tourism. I deny completely the validity of that claim. I cannot imagine visitors to South Australia going to the Tourist Bureau or any other travel agency and saying that they want to go to an area covered by a certain local council. They will refer to the name of the area and not to a local council. Local councils have nothing whatever to do with an appeal to tourists.

The member for Rocky River also spoke about councils losing their identity, and in this respect he referred particularly to the Crystal Brook council. I suggest that the identity of any area is not the council. People in an area identify it by their friends, the local hotel or hotels, the sports club, the actual environs, or, if it is a very small area, the general store. Rarely do people speak about a council when they are talking about the identity of an area. I thank the member for Heysen for saying something profoundly wise, and that is not unusual for him. He said that little parochial attitudes should be forgotten. That is precisely what the recommendations of the Royal Commission ask people to do. After all, if we maintain these parochial little attitudes, as expressed in the maintenance of useless and unviable councils, all we are doing is setting the interests of one group of South Australians in one area against the interests of a group of South Australians in a nearby area. In view of what the member for Eyre has said about differences between urban and country areas, I reiterate that the differences have been largely overcome because of the swiftness of travel and ease of communication between all sections of the State.

The member for Eyre also charged the Government with certain bias in making changes after the first report. If he were in the Chamber at present, I would ask him whether the Government's acceptance of the continued existence of Hindmarsh council constitutes a bowing to political requirement. That council is in an area known as a blue ribbon Labor area. There was no reason whatever on a political basis to make the decision made by the Government. It is fair to say that a time will come when the Hindmarsh and Thebarton councils will agree that it is time to get together, as they are so close to each other. In fact, there is now only one fire brigade for the two areas, when there used to be two; subsequently, there will be one council covering both areas.

Mr. Gunn: Do you believe that we should have the greater Brisbane concept in South Australia?

Mr. CRIMES: I have just noted the return of the honourable member.

Mr. Gunn: I haven't been out of the Chamber.

Mr. CRIMES: I am sorry I did not hear the honourable member's interjection, as I should like to have replied to it. I suggest that, in relation to this Bill, we have seen exhibited in this House an excitement about local government that is in no way shared by most people in the State. I believe that if most people, including those in council areas that will be affected and those in areas that will not be affected, understood the issues involved and the benefits to be obtained from the viability, efficiency and economy in local government that would follow the adoption of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, they would be right behind Government members in supporting this Bill. With great pleasure, I support it.

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): I oppose the Bill, which I just cannot support in its present form. I liken it to an old motor car that has many rattles and squeaks. In order to get rid of the rattles in the Commission's report, the Government withdrew 17 councils from the proposed

split-up. Having withdrawn those councils and got rid of the rattles, it now finds that the squeaks are becoming more prominent and are developing into rattles, so it has decided to appoint a Select Committee to get rid of the squeaks. I think it would be far better if it drove the old bus over the cliff and started afresh. I believe the Government's proposed system for larger councils stems from the regional system operating in England at present. When I was there recently, with others I was given much information about local government. I understand that the system in England is such that the areas are large and that the councils are responsible for education and the administration of many other Government departmental matters in their areas.

Mr. Coumbe: Housing, for instance.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, councils are responsible for many governmental activities. The conditions in England cannot be compared with those in Australia. In England, there are huge populations in small areas with great sums of money available for administration. However, in South Australia there is a built-up area in the city, and the vast expanses of marginal land having little population. I am convinced that the English system could not operate in the country areas of the State. The Minister has said on many occasions, and he repeated it this evening, that councils should stand on their own feet and not rely on Government hand-outs. However, it is impossible for a council to rely solely on local revenue, such as rates and licence fees.

The motoring public would be one of the most severely taxed groups in the State. The motoring public contributes to the State motor registration fees, driver's licence fees, and road tolls, which are paid to the Highways Fund. It also pays the petrol tax, which yields \$40 000 000 a year from this State to the Commonwealth Government, of which about \$30 000 000 a year is returned as grants. Yet the Minister claims that councils should remain viable and operate without any such grants. Despite the fact that traffic from other areas uses roads in a council's area, the Minister expects the council to maintain those roads. I cannot agree with the Minister's argument. The Government has said that there will be no saving in cost through the redistribution of boundaries, and in that respect I fully agree with it. The Minister's second reading explanation states:

However, it has become increasingly clear that opposition whipped up by some sections of the community may well have destroyed the whole of the Commission's report and, in the interests of local government, I do not think we can afford to let that happen.

To whom is the Minister referring when he refers to "opposition whipped up by some sections of the community"? Is he referring to councillors, vested interests, or business houses? The Minister's second reading explanation also states:

I urge members to deliberate seriously on these matters, placing the interests of local government as a whole above those of sectional groups which may have a vested interest in preserving the *status quo*.

To whom is the Minister referring when he refers to "sectional groups which may have a vested interest in preserving the *status quo*"? The Minister's second reading explanation also states:

That is why I urge members to deliberate very seriously in the interests of local government and to desist from engaging in petty Party politicking.

I gather that the Minister claims that there is some petty Party politicking in local government. I cannot speak for any council other than the council in which I was involved for 12 years. Never on any occasion when I was Chairman of that council did I allow politics of any nature to be introduced into that council. Members of both Parties

were on the council, and there was general agreement that politics were never to be mentioned, and we had a very happy council.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Are you supporting the establishment of a Select Committee?

Mr. ALLEN: I am opposing the Bill. The Minister's second reading explanation also states:

The present largest rural district council in terms of revenue will not grow bigger under the recommendations; in fact it becomes slightly smaller.

I do not think anyone is complaining about the size of councils in terms of revenue: most country members are complaining about the size of councils in terms of area because, as the area becomes too large, a council becomes inefficient; no-one will convince me otherwise. The Minister's second reading explanation also states:

Another complaint was that particular areas provide good services. The Commission did not deny this, but did point out that many areas depended on the activities of other councils.

When the Minister refers to the activities of other councils, I gather that he is referring to a situation where a corporation area is inside a district council area. I agree with the Minister that, where a corporation area exists within a district council area, the corporation has to maintain the streets, the town lighting, the district hall, the toilet blocks, etc., which are all used to a large extent by the people from the surrounding district council area when they visit the town. So, I agree that some councils could be dependent on the activities of other councils. In a case like that, an amalgamation on the lines suggested would be beneficial. Eight council areas are completely within my electoral district and four council areas are partly within my electoral district. About two-thirds of those councils are opposed to the amalgamation, and one-third of the councils are violently opposed.

One of the main objections to the amalgamation, particularly in my area, is that councils I represent at present are on the edge of the areas in South Australia that do not have local government. These areas are sparsely populated, and their outer boundary runs into pastoral country. At present they have difficulties with lines of communication, and amalgamation would cause those lines of communication to become too long. Once an army's lines of communication get too long, it is vulnerable to attack, and it cannot maintain its supplies. This sort of situation applies to one council area to such an extent that, if workmen are working on its outer boundary, by the time they get to work in the morning and service the plant they have morning tea before they start the machinery. Because of the distance they travel, they cannot do more than five hours of effective road work a day.

This kind of situation also applies to the Highways Department depot at Clare. When the men travel to Spalding to do repair work on the road, they always have morning tea before they take the equipment off the truck, and they can do only five hours of effective work a day. If we amalgamate the outer council areas to make larger areas, this matter will be one of the serious problems. All three councils in my area that violently oppose the amalgamation are very efficient. Their roads would be equal to any roads in the North, while their rates would be the lowest in the North. Their towns are neat and tidy, and neighbouring councils regard them as an object lesson in efficiency.

The Hallett council is to be split into three portions, one going to Peterborough, one to Jamestown, and the largest to Burra. It is a pity that this council area is to be carved into three sections. If the Commission had

considered amalgamating two whole councils to make a new council, this might have been more acceptable than carving a district into sections. I think if that had been done, it might have been more acceptable, but the people have been upset because the council is to be carved three different ways. I cannot blame them for taking exception to this move.

The member for Rocky River referred to the District Council of Spalding, in which I am particularly interested because I live in that town. That council is to be cut into two, one half going to Jamestown and the other to Clare. Had the Commission amalgamated the councils of Spalding and Hallett, this move might have been acceptable, because both councils are similar in relation to the condition of their roads and their rates, and the amalgamation may have worked well. However, to cut two councils into five different parts is not acceptable to ratepayers, and I cannot blame them.

Morgan council violently opposes this move. That council has been placed in the ironical situation that it is to be moved into the Waikerie council area but does not want to amalgamate, and the Waikerie council does not want to have to take the Morgan council. At present many holiday homes on the river have been erected in the Morgan council area. We hope the homes will be there after the flood. Rate revenue has increased considerably because of the erection of these homes.

The Royal Commission briefly referred to areas outside council areas. The Minister has expressed his views on this matter from time to time, and I understand the Royal Commission's report suggested it would consider this matter in future. If it does consider it, and if local government comes to those outside areas, perhaps the Morgan council would be given a large area of country to its north that would make the council more viable, controlling an area much larger than that controlled by the present council, so that it would be able to exist without having to be amalgamated with another council. That matter should be considered by the Minister.

I have received several letters, to which I will now refer. The councils of Morgan, Hallett, and Robertstown have presented petitions to Parliament, and I had the pleasure of presenting petitions from the Hallett and Robertstown councils, signed by 370 residents of the district. A petition from the Morgan council, presented in the Upper House, contained about 370 signatures. The petition from the Robertstown council was sponsored without any approaches being made by councillors. To prove that point, I will read the letter that accompanied the petition forwarded to this House, as follows:

Please find enclosed petitions to Parliament which have been collected in the Robertstown council area. As you are our representative in Parliament, would you please present these petitions to Parliament on our behalf. I would like to stress that this is a spontaneous effort by local residents. It has not been prompted directly or otherwise by local council. These petitions have been taken around by several people and we thought they could be presented as one petition; however, we will leave this to your discretion, this is why they are not all fixed together.

P.S. If more time were available, we could have still got more signatures.

There were 379 signatures on the petition.

Mr. Chapman: How many ratepayers in the district?

Mr. ALLEN: There would be no more than 450: the petitioners were short of time because they wanted to present the petition before the Bill had been introduced. Such an action gives the lie direct to the suggestion made from time to time that most opposition to this Bill is coming from councillors and not from ratepayers. This is one instance that refutes what has been said in this

regard. The covering letter with the petition from Hallett council was similar to the letter from Robertstown. I have received a letter from a person residing in a council area, a council that I cannot say approved of the amalgamation but, as I have received no communication or protest from that council, I assume it accepts the recommendations. The letter states:

As you are our member of Parliament, the enclosed brochure will interest you regarding the Labor-Socialist strategy for destroying the States, and in particular local government. This excellent brochure, based on facts, exposes in many ways the cleverly concealed hook of the tempting bait the Whitlam-Socialist are offering to local government if they will accept and organise into regional councils. Local government authorities will be required to "voluntary" combine into regional bodies before they are eligible for the money.

In these regional bodies they will have minority representation, and will have to accept the terms which the Department of Urban and Regional Affairs, under Mr. Tom Uren, will stipulate for the spending of the money. Local government, under this scheme, will be turned from a body elected and representative of local citizens, into a department of the Commonwealth Government. In time the new "departments" under the name, "Regional Governments", will be given the functions which now belong to the States. It is unconstitutional, the people have not been consulted. It is one of the gravest threats to the federal system since the turn of this century.

Mr. Chapman: That shows the master plan.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, that is the master plan. I now refer to one or two comments made by the member for Spence: they illustrate that the honourable member is very ignorant of council matters. I will send a copy of his speech to people in my district, because I am sure that constituents of mine will be pleased to hear what he said this evening. The honourable member posed the question, "Why is the Opposition so interested in maintaining the *status quo*?" I remind the honourable member that more than half of the Opposition members have had considerable experience of local government. We understand the difficulties associated with it and its inner workings, but I understand that only two Government members have had experience of local government. Perhaps someone will correct me if I am wrong. The member for Spence said that business people wanted to maintain the *status quo* in order to sell goods to councils.

We continually advocate decentralisation as the only way to retain the population in our small country towns, and to retain local business people there, too. The only way they could survive is to do business with councils, so that I suggest that business people would naturally want to maintain the *status quo*, otherwise small country towns would fade away. The honourable member said that members of Parliament received complaints from constituents that concerned local government. That is so but, on the other hand, local government often receives complaints from people who should complain to their member of Parliament: it cuts both ways. That is part of the job because, as members of Parliament, it is our job to put people right on these matters. He also said that some councils were weak and non-viable but, regarding non-viable councils, it is difficult to know where to draw the line. He also said that larger councils would be more efficient. I do not support his contention, because I know of large councils that are not efficient and of small councils that are efficient. He also said that larger councils would require less equipment. That could apply in a minor way but, in more than 90 per cent of cases, more equipment would be needed because council areas would be so large that the council would get only five hours effective work a day from the equipment. So, more equipment and additional employees would be

needed to do the same amount of work as is now being done by small councils

Mr. Chapman: It's Labor Party policy to create more jobs.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, but where will the money come from to foot the bill? That is what the people are worried about.

Mr. Chapman: Increasing the rates is their answer.

Mr. ALLEN: That eventually reaches saturation point, and it has reached saturation point already in some cases. If that is the Party's thinking, local government in South Australia faces a bleak future. I oppose the Bill.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I will support the Bill through the second reading stage so that it may be referred to a Select Committee and so that people in the community, whether elected members of local government or citizens, will be able to put their points of view to the committee. Subsequently, I will decide whether to support an amended Bill. I assure the Minister that I will not support the third reading of the Bill as it now stands unless it is amended in relation to the areas to which I will refer. One could ask why we are considering a different proposition from that presented in the Royal Commission's first report or even its second report. One could also ask why the Minister has encouraged some of his own back-benchers to speak in the debate to help protect Cabinet's and his own decisions. The Minister has denied that it was for any political considerations that the specific changes have been made. Those of us who have been members for at least a few years understand the procedures here: when a Minister is in trouble, he gets as many back-benchers as possible to speak to try to protect the Government's cause. That is what has happened in this debate, and the Government cannot deny it.

The argument has been raised that we need viability in local government, which the Minister says should stand on its own two feet. In other words, local council should be able to raise money in its own area to carry out its financial burdens. The Minister knows that that is not true or possible. He knows that, in the spread of wealth, as his political philosophy takes him, people in the rich areas pay more income tax and other taxes and, in many cases, they have more motor vehicles and pay more fuel tax and motor registration fees. Those local government areas in which people pay more council rates on average, because of the value of their properties, may be able to stand on their own two feet. However, many of the areas from which the Minister's own political support comes should perhaps be given extra considerations, but not to the degree that they have been given in recent times. He knows that those areas could not carry the burden, so he speaks with a forked tongue when making such a statement. Efficiency is not necessarily achieved by making something larger. To suggest that the Commonwealth Government is more efficient than State Government or that State Government is any more efficient than local government, whether it be Adelaide or Walkerville, is ridiculous. If ever the Australian people should sit back and study the administration in local government, State Government and Commonwealth Government, they need to do so now. One can see that bad administration can bring a country to the brink of economic disaster; this applies also to local government, whether it be large or small in monetary terms.

I do not believe it a fair argument to say that, because a council is small, it cannot be viable. That is not a just argument, nor can it be substantiated. The Minister, other Government members, and the Opposition know that some small councils in the State that are viable,

successful and effective serve the people well and carry out the functions expected of them. Regarding money, who would say that none of the fuel tax paid should go back to local government to help with rates? What man in his right mind would say that? It is just not on. What man would say that all money paid in motor registration fees in this country (which has one of the highest fees in the world) should go to State revenue and that none of it should go to local authorities? The biggest burden on local government nowadays is in providing facilities for motor vehicles and for the people who drive them, yet almost all of the revenue raised from motor vehicles, except in council areas that have parking meters, is taken away from local government. It is unjustifiable to say that none of that money should go back to local government.

There is only one sane and proper way in which we can distribute money to local government, that is, for it to have its own administration and representation from each local government area, and grants being made available on a percentage basis from State Government and Commonwealth Government revenue regularly each year so that local government would know what the percentage would be of the total revenue in those two areas. Local government should decide where the money should be spent; it should not be done as is being done now, with a Commonwealth octopus which says, "You can't spend it. We won't give it to you until you tell us what your road programme is."

I do not object to the attitude taken by the New South Wales Government, which objected strongly by saying, "We don't want the money with that kind of string attached." That is the kind of operation we have in Australia now. We all know that the South Australian Government's idea is to have regional local government eventually; that is part of its political platform and philosophy, and this Bill is the first step in that direction. Although the Bill may not go as far as the Minister and those closest to him would have liked it to go, he may get it passed in relation to having 88 councils instead of 72. The Minister will accept the Bill as the first step along the path to what he and those who support him call success.

We know that the decisions that have been made have some political considerations in them. Any second-year or third-year high school student or anyone with any common sense can look at the plan and see that pressures were brought to bear and considerations were given to benefit certain members. Many members represent districts in which the councils operating objected to the original recommendations. Unfortunately, we were not in the Cabinet and had insufficient influence to ensure that the recommendations were changed to suit the needs of our own areas, especially to block any adverse effect that such changes might have on voting trends.

I refer to the situation applying in respect of Brighton and Glenelg councils. I ask any fair-minded person to consider the area and the population distribution in those areas and compare them with the situation that would apply if the plan concerning Noarlunga and Marion were proceeded with. I refer especially to land area and population densities to show how unjustified the situation is. I believe the situation applying in respect of the Noarlunga and the Marion areas should be considered particularly, because they are the areas expected to receive the greatest initial benefit if the Meadows council is disbanded. Why is nearly \$1 000 000 being spent on creating a central

community centre in the Noarlunga area, with Commonwealth and State Government support? Why is \$500 000 being spent on a community complex at Marion, also with Commonwealth funds? What is the basis of thinking behind these two moves? The plans were not developed yesterday. The first decision was taken about a year ago, applications for finance were lodged about 18 months ago, and we knew that recommendations made involved those two centres.

The Meadows council has not recorded the same sort of support to develop areas in its western region, such as at O'Halloran Hill, Braeview, Flagstaff Hill, Darlington, Happy Valley, Aberfoyle Park, Coromandel Valley and other areas. Have those newly developed areas, which need sporting facilities and community centres just as badly as they are needed in Noarlunga and Marion, received any support? No! Some people and groups in the community foresaw that the Meadows council area would be broken up. What community of interest there is between people at Sellick Beach and those at the top of Chandler Hill, above Happy Valley? Yet those people who are being brought together by these recommendations will be connected with the Willunga council area. Certainly, there is no community of interest there.

I do not agree with the remarks of the member for Heysen concerning the people living in the Meadows area. True, in the past the member for Heysen may have been right, most of the people in that area regarding Strathalbyn and Mount Barker as their community centre. However, both he and I know that that trend is changing. Today, people are buying small farmlets, and larger farms have been subdivided because they are no longer economic propositions. People are leaving the city and married couples, who may keep a couple of horses and perhaps other animals on these farmlets, commute to the city. If a new central council office is established in the Happy Valley and Aberfoyle Park area, people commuting in that area will pass that central office. Some people living east of Meadows township may have a common interest with people in Strathalbyn, but considerations of that kind can be reviewed by the Select Committee later.

People generally seem to commute along the Echunga road to Stirling and thence to the city, where they work. Young people who have grown up on dairy farms are not staying on them. Instead, they are becoming apprentices or doing other work in the city. Tertiary students and other people commute through Stirling to the city. Therefore, the trend of movement and the community of interest are through either the Happy Valley area or the Stirling area. Certainly, the area of interest today is not as much Strathalbyn as it was in the past, and it will be less an area of interest in the future.

Doubtless, the Happy Valley area and those suburbs in the Meadows council area and the adjoining Mitcham council area, show potential for a viable council, with the addition of the Meadows rural area, which will not remain as a rural area as we now know it. It will become a farmlet area similar to other Hills areas, from which people commute to the city. There will always be an area common to the Meadows people; that is, in respect of sporting facilities and the interchange involved in sport generally. However, this will not involve Strathalbyn as the centre of community interest. Tennis teams will travel to Coromandel Valley, and the community of interest certainly does not lie in the area towards Noarlunga. The only reason people at O'Halloran Hill or Braeview have for sending their children to the Reynella school is that the schools at Flagstaff Hill and Happy Valley have not yet been built. Indeed, the Minister of Education

admits that the community of interest lies towards Coromandel Valley, because schools are being built at Aberfoyle Park and Coromandel Valley South to take the overflow from the Blackwood Primary School. The Minister knows where the community of interest really is.

When the high school is built at Flagstaff Hill and another one at Coromandel Valley, few young people will be required to cross the busy South Road and to move into the Marion or Noarlunga council areas. There is no justification then to say that the community of interest lies in those areas. What community with the correct attitude to the safety of its children will encourage them to cross the Main South Road, along which cars travel often at a great speed? That will not happen, and every member of the Government knows exactly what the position is, especially the Minister of Development and Mines, who represents that district.

The Meadows District Council can survive as a viable council, and all members know it. In the past, people in rural areas complained, and perhaps they supported, for instance, developing urban areas such as those in the Meadows council area. The urban sector of the Meadows council area now realises that it has the power in its hands whereby, if that council is retained as an entity, the people will have their own community centre at Happy Valley, and they will not have to go tracking down to Noarlunga to inquire about a community matter; they will not have to go to Marion, if they live in Stirling, to find out other information. If this area is retained intact, the people concerned will know that they still have the power to control their council and determine the services and facilities to be provided in their district.

No-one can deny that the situation has changed, and it has changed in much the same way in every other fringe area of Adelaide. I strongly support the claim by the Meadows council that it should survive and be retained intact. It has been suggested that this Bill should be thrown out and rejected in its entirety, but I believe that something can be salvaged, especially if the Select Committee operates to full advantage. If it does not, I do not intend to support the Bill in its final stages.

I now refer to the situation applying in respect of the Corporation of the City of Henley and Grange, and the problems confronting it. I believe it is important that reference to this area be included in *Hansard*, especially as the Minister of Environment and Conservation, who represents most of this area, has not yet been willing to state the case of this council. A submission sent to all members by this council states:

This council is bitterly opposed to legislation currently before Parliament dealing with the alteration to council boundaries, and in particular the proposal to amalgamate the city of Henley and Grange with Woodville and West Torrens councils. In view of the points mentioned herein, this council is at a loss to understand why Henley and Grange should be the only council in the suburban area to be faced with amalgamation. The council firmly believes that this would be a gross miscarriage of justice as well as a denial of the democratic wishes of the majority of its ratepayers.

The Minister of Local Government has seen fit to slash the recommendations of the very Royal Commission which he had promoted and in doing so has created a most anomalous and almost immoral situation. This council wishes to refer to the current proposals as they affect the suburban area, and, of course, Henley and Grange, in particular. Despite other actions which could have arisen from the Royal Commission's reports, it is now proposed that the following suburban councils (as well as Brighton) be left with existing boundaries: Kensington and Norwood, St. Peters, Walkerville, Thebarton, and Hindmarsh. Henley and Grange is considerably larger in terms of rate revenue, area and population than any of the above councils.'

On what basis does the Government make the decision to do away with Henley and Grange when it is bigger in area and greater in population and rate revenue than any of the councils I have just mentioned?

Mr. Coumbe: What does the local member for Henley Beach think about it?

Mr. EVANS: He is not here; he is not prepared to stand up and say why he does not protest on behalf of Henley and Grange. The document continues:

It is the only council which has now reached one of the stated criteria, that is, \$500 000 rate revenue. It has further areas yet to be developed, and a greater potential for redevelopment. It is 50 per cent larger in area than the largest of the councils mentioned (Hindmarsh) and nearly three times as large as the smallest (Walkerville). It is the only city council in the whole of South Australia which would disappear as the result of amalgamation.

Yet the member for that area is not here to say anything about it. That is what he thinks of the people in that area. The letter continues:

There has been no reason expressed in the latest reshuffle of ideas why Henley and Grange is the only suburban council proposed for amalgamation. In searching the report of the Royal Commission one possible reason emerges: "We have before us, and have heard considerable evidence relating to a petition signed by residents of West Beach signifying a desire to transfer from the Corporation of the City of Henley and Grange and be incorporated into the City of West Torrens".

Why do we set about doing away with the Henley and Grange council when we consider all the facts before us? We can look at the map and see the size of Glenelg and Brighton, as it is intended to preserve those areas; and we can see the size of St. Peters, Walkerville, and Kensington and Norwood. No-one can claim that it is not a political decision. Of course it is politics, and the Minister of Education is the man we all know who has brought most pressure to bear on Cabinet. He said, "I'm in trouble." We know it and the Minister knows it from meetings in his area. The Minister of Education has brought pressure to bear on his colleagues to change the boundaries in his area recommended in the second report of the Royal Commission. All we are facing now is a mocked-up report to suit a political Party. It is not a genuine attempt to help local government; it is nothing of the sort. The report provides some political mileage for the Australian Labor Party and will at least preserve some of its members from an embarrassing situation. I hope that, when the rate-payers of Henley and Grange have their meeting at 8 p.m. on Friday of this week, a group of people will be there prepared to stand up and ask the Minister of Environment and Conservation what he thinks about their environment. I hope the same thing will happen when the Minister of Development and Mines attends a similar meeting in his district next Friday.

Dr. Eastick: The Minister of Environment and Conservation will have Dr. Rogers breathing down his neck.

Mr. EVANS: I have heard that the people of Henley and Grange are 10 to one against. Dr. Rogers does not have to worry about this because, to win the next election, he knows he has the numbers and the Minister has lost the credibility that people at one time believed he had. If ever a Minister should have had the courage to stand up and state his case for or against, this was the occasion, in the case of both the Minister of Environment and Conservation and the Minister of Development and Mines. I have no doubt that in my own area there are some people who do not even know there is a proposal to change council boundaries; nor do they foresee or understand the benefits or otherwise it may bring them.

I wish to refer to one or two things mentioned by other speakers about local government that must be considered; for example, the talk about local government standing on its own two feet". If this plan, as we see it now, went through, the Stirling council would be given a part of Meadows that the Meadows people themselves find it difficult to look after because there is very little rate revenue from it. A small part of it is a water catchment area, but mainly it is an area where an ever-increasing amount of noxious weed is intruding into the hills face zone. It cannot be densely populated, so the rate revenue there will not be high. The other areas moving into Willunga will be largely areas that are non-ratable—a water catchment area and a Woods and Forests Department area. There are recreation parks and wildlife parks, areas that the Government has acquired, and the Minister says "Local government must stand on its own two feet." How can local government look after all those facilities while getting no help from the Government and all it is doing, for the most part, is trying to make sure that metropolitan Adelaide has a good water supply?

We know it is only preserving the quality of water, and the Hills people carry the burden. The Minister makes the point that we need some special help to purify our water, and so we do. We are at the sewer end of the Murray River. We should get some extra consideration; the Hills people carry the burden for many of the pipes, parks and recreation areas. Many of their areas are used as recreation playgrounds for city people, and also we help protect the metropolitan drinking water supply. When we speak of the services given by local government, the Emergency Fire Services are an important part of the services given in the Hills, because those fire services help protect many of the State's assets as well as the assets of the community in those areas. The Woods and Forests Department would not have enough manpower to protect its forests were it not for the local volunteer E.F.S. people giving their services in the Adelaide Hills and in the District of Kavel, including Gumeracha, where about 30 per cent of the land is owned by the State Government.

If this proposal is accepted, the area served by the Cherry Gardens E.F.S. unit will be split in about four different directions. This area has an efficient service, a community of interests, and sporting and recreation facilities. It is a satisfactory local government area. Where would we find a local government area in Adelaide or in South Australia where there was total satisfaction? There will never be, nor will we find that to be the case in relation to the State Government or Commonwealth Government. It cannot be. However, in that area, the service that is given is good. I do not deny that we get bad administration at times in some council areas, and this applies also to the State Government. I made that point earlier but, in the long term, it is better to keep the government of the people close to the people. If we divorce people from local government, we may divorce them from an interest in the area concerned.

That may be the philosophy of the present Government—I do not know—but it is not my philosophy. My philosophy is that, where the people have an opportunity to participate and the council has an opportunity to survive, that opportunity should be given. If the Meadows council and, indeed, the Henley and Grange council were deteriorating in rate revenue, going downhill, becoming less efficient and having less potential for being efficient and viable, I could support the thinking behind the plan; but the reverse is the case. Both councils are doing better each year.

They are being taken over by some other council, resulting in massive areas such as is proposed for Noarlunga and Marion, which I cannot accept. Indeed, I cannot accept this as honest thinking and, if ever a political decision was taken in this House on a certain matter after a report had been made, it was taken when Cabinet and Caucus of the present A.L.P. Government played around with the Royal Commission's report.

I want to see local government made effective. I have three councils (Stirling, Mitcham and Meadows) in my district, in all of which problems have been experienced. However, in the main these councils have given as good a service as any other council in the State has given. Indeed, I believe the service given by Mitcham council is not surpassed by that of any other council, even though it has not received the hand-outs that other councils have received. Everyone must agree that the Garden Suburb of Colonel Light Gardens should be amalgamated with the Mitcham council. However, at least some compensation should be given to Mitcham council to offset the cost of making the Garden Suburb's facilities equivalent to its own. This is a burden that the Government, not the rate-payers of Mitcham, should carry, because it is not the Mitcham council's fault that the Garden Suburb's facilities are perhaps not as good as they should be. I support the second reading.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I, too, support the Bill. It is imperative that it be referred to a Select Committee, which will enable evidence to be given by people who are concerned about the matter. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that local government was desirable and that it must perform its duty, but I should like to know exactly what he meant by "perform its duty". The Royal Commission said that something must be done, and I commend it for the excellent job it has done, as it indeed had a difficult task to perform. The terms of reference laid down by the Minister left the Commission little scope and, indeed, made it most difficult for its members at times.

I disagree with the Minister's reference in the second reading explanation to "Party politicking". I take him up on that point and also on his statement that no metropolitan council will become larger than any existing council. The Minister said that certain remarks made about the ability of smaller councils was uninformed propaganda. What a ridiculous statement that was for the Minister to make! Is he saying what the member for Spence said earlier regarding small councils? The member for Spence made statements on something about which he knew nothing. He needs to go to a course on local government to educate himself on what local government is all about. He said some silly things about the amalgamation of materials and equipment held by councils, and said that having larger councils would mean fewer costs, which is ridiculous.

It has been proved time and time again that many smaller councils are viable and service their constituents far better than do some large councils. I am not saying that all large councils are bad administrations and that only the smaller councils provide the facilities that their ratepayers expect to be provided. However, it was absolutely ridiculous for the Minister in his second reading explanation to say that this was uninformed propaganda. The Royal Commission in its report said that any council could be inefficient and that this did not relate to size. The Minister should therefore examine that aspect of the report and digest it not only for his own benefit but also for that of the State generally. The whole point of the exercise is that the Minister did not realise the power and the following of local government. This was a great shock to him, and I

hope he has learnt much from this exercise. One well remembers a couple of years ago the Minister introducing a Bill relating to compulsion in local government. He got his fingers burnt then, and realised that he should give local government the respect it deserved.

In his contribution to the debate, the member for Elizabeth referred to community interest. Who can say what "community interest" really means? This is a difficult matter, even for a lawyer. Who is to say that, because people go to a certain sporting area or shopping centre they should live in the area? Does the member for Elizabeth believe that the many thousands of people who visit the Adelaide Zoo each year should live there? His whole argument in this respect was ridiculous. Before one gets into arguments like that, one must define what "community interest" means. If one cannot do that, it is best for one to leave the whole argument alone. I refer now to paragraph 5 on page 7 of the Royal Commission's second report, when it referred to the submission made to it by the city of Payneham, as follows:

The council endorses the Commission's thoughts that, for the good of local government generally, finality on boundaries should be reached as soon as possible.

The Commission continued:

But most of all, we believe that the matter is urgent because of the effect of the present uncertainties on staff.

If portion of a council area was to be annexed to another council area, it is obvious that the council from which the section was being removed would not be interested in doing any work in that section. Again, a problem arises. It is urgent that a decision, one way or the other, be made in a reasonable time. At page 8, under the heading "General Observations", the second report of the Commission states:

It is pointless for many councils to argue before us that they are currently carrying out the tasks entrusted to local government. We venture to suggest that there are very few councils indeed which are fully carrying out all of the matters entrusted to them under the Local Government Act . . .

This means that it boils down to a question of finance. We all know what Mr. Whitlam has said is the Commonwealth Government's policy with regard to local government regions. In fact, this policy is almost operating now. The Commonwealth Government has decided that certain local government areas will be defined as regions. If they are to receive finance (under the direction of the Commonwealth Government), they must get together and operate schemes. At the 1974 Conference of the Institute of Municipal Administration (Raymond West Oration) at Melbourne on February 19 this year, as reported in *Local Government Administration*, Mr. Whitlam said:

It is not, however, simply a matter of providing more money. At the risk of voicing a truism, let me say that the importance of local government derives from the very fact that it is local—that the services and facilities it provides have such a close and direct impact on the welfare of the population it serves. It is our aim, in part, to make available to local government funds more adequate for its functions. But our aim is larger than that. If local government is to play the fuller and more effective part that I believe the community wishes it to play, then we must also increase the effective influence local government exercises in relation to the fundamental decision-making affecting its activities. It will represent a most significant step towards real federalism, real local participation in public affairs—and, indeed, real decentralisation of government—when this is achieved.

I do not support a greater Adelaide plan, which the member for Spence said that he thought would be of some advantage. The member for Whyalla referred yesterday to the advantages of the greater Brisbane plan. At page 12, the second report of the Commission states:

In evidence before us, Mr. Lawrance Gordon Curtis, himself a member of the Adelaide City Council, gave evidence in his private capacity that the number of councils in the Metropolitan Planning Area should be reduced drastically to six councils. We did not accept this proposition; but some of the views expressed by Mr. Curtis are of considerable interest.

I agree with the Commission that the proposal of six councils in the metropolitan area is unacceptable. I am pleased to see that, at page 37 of the first report, the Commission states, "We do not favour a greater Adelaide concept." Here again the Commission does not accept the suggestion of Mr. Curtis, although one or two members opposite seem to agree with it. At page 33 of the first report, the Commission states:

We appreciate that change should not be made for the sake of change, and for that reason we are inclined to agree with the recommendations of the Local Government Act Revision Committee that no permanent boundaries commission should be set up. Nevertheless, it does appear on the surface that councils have been somewhat reluctant to undergo voluntarily any re-examination of boundaries, and in these circumstances we can only suggest that the matter should be looked at somewhat more frequently than has been the case in the past.

The Local Government Act Revision Committee operated for several years. In its report, Mr. H. A. Norman, LL.B., is reported to have said:

When we start getting rid of small councils, we start to get rid of local government ... I think there is quite a bit of misguided thinking in the suggestion that a council is too small in its revenue: to my way of thinking, the importance of the council should be judged, not by its revenue, but by the field of the service that it renders to the community.

Mr. J. C. Slaughter, formerly the Town Clerk of the City of Brisbane, is reported to have said:

I do not claim that efficiency automatically improves with size—the standard of efficiency is affected by many factors in a political body over which the administrator has little say.

In New Zealand, Mr. C. L. Bishop said, on his retirement from the secretaryship of the Municipal Association of New Zealand (and this is included in the report of the Local Government Act Revision Committee at page 39):

My experience has been this: some of the smaller and medium-sized authorities are just as efficient, if not more so, than the very big ones. When a smaller body has been amalgamated with a bigger one there is no evidence to show that any economies have been effected. In some cases, it could be shown that the combined expenditure has not shown any decrease, nor have the rates.

These gentlemen are quoted in the massive report of this committee that was made to the Minister of Local Government a couple of years ago. What is said there does not support at all the revision of local government boundaries. Why on earth, and under what pressure, did the Minister introduce this Bill when he had this excellent report of the Local Government Act Revision Committee? I have said that I will support the Bill because it will be referred to a Select Committee. The opportunity will be given at meetings of that committee for people to give evidence if they are still dissatisfied with the boundaries set-up.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): I support the second reading. Although I am willing to accept that the Bill will be referred to a Select Committee, I doubt whether such a committee will resolve the existing situation. No matter how many times the Royal Commission was called together, some people would still be dissatisfied. It was courageous of the Government to ask for a Royal Commission and to expect that any report made by the Commission would be completely acceptable to the people. However, it was foolhardy of the Government to think that it could force the recommendations on the people. It was only natural

that the people would want to have their say. In the Royal Commission's report the following are some of the criteria set out:

2. The community of interests of people, whether such interests are economic, social, regional or otherwise.

3. The existence or absence of communication or travel in any area, the effectiveness or otherwise of such communication or travel and the distance between centres and other parts of any areas.

4. The physical features of any locality or localities.

5. The desirability of retaining, where possible, all staff and employees at present employed by councils in council employment.

6. Any other matter considered to be a proper matter to be taken into account.

From the time the report was released questions were asked in this House. On August 6, the member for Glenelg asked the Premier whether there would be a free vote on the Bill for the adoption of the Royal Commission's report. The following is part of the Premier's reply (at page 270 of *Hansard*):

If members take the time to read the Royal Commission's report, which I suggest they do rather than go off half-cocked, they will see that the Commission intends to investigate the matter further to provide for proper transitional provisions that will allow for the needs of local residents to be met in any arrangements for transfer. This matter would be encompassed in any Bill put before the House and I am sure that, if members address themselves to the measure rather than to politics, they will find the needs of their local residents can be properly met in their representations in this House upon the Bill.

I emphasise the last part of the Premier's reply, that members "will find the needs of their local residents can be properly met in their representations in this House upon the Bill". That was said by the Premier, and the Minister did not like it. On August 7, the Minister announced that the people would have the opportunity to make further submissions to the Royal Commission. On August 7, the *Guardian* published a statement by Councillor Dr. Reece Jennings of the West Torrens council. The article is headed "Take-over angers Novar citizens". The Minister will not like what the *Guardian* says, and he knows it, because his Party got into a hell of a lot of trouble in regard to Novar Gardens. I am pleased that the residents of Novar Gardens have been recognised, but they would not have been recognised if the local member had not been invited to the public meeting called by Dr. Jennings. The Minister may laugh, but I challenge him to deny that Dr. Jennings was called before the State A.L.P. Council to account for his actions.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's a complete lie, and you know it.

Mr. BECKER: The Minister knows what else has gone on behind the scenes in Novar Gardens and in my district over the last 18 months, and I will stand up and fight the Minister on this matter anywhere he likes. I will not tolerate his mongrel tactics.

The Hon G. T. Virgo: It's a lie. It's a filthy lie.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister. The honourable member for Hanson.

Mr. BECKER: One well-known Labor Party supporter said at that meeting, "Thank God we have a Liberal member of Parliament in this area who will stand up and put our views to State Parliament." This was said in the very week when the Premier said in this House that members could come along and bring their representations for and on behalf of their constituents and they would be considered. A Labor Party member said at that meeting, "Thank God we have a Liberal member because we have a good chance of getting our way." That hurt the Minister more than anything else. My Party insists that we are responsible to our constituents: we are not responsible to any outside body



or organisation, and therefore I will conform to the wishes of my constituents.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Is this your speech for preselection?

Mr. BECKER: Preselection has nothing to do with it because I have nothing to fear. In my district we have uncovered probably one of the worst conspiracies that could ever have been contrived and this was the issue that broke the whole thing as far as the Labor Party was concerned in my district. I could say a lot more that would really embarrass the Minister, because this old wound goes back two years. There has been no love lost between the Minister and me. That is fair enough, because he plays politics hard, and I will match him any time he likes. On behalf of the people of Glenelg North and Novar Gardens, I am delighted that the Minister buckled under pressure.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You and Snedden are a pair of good puppets on a Liberal Party platform. You're a couple of galahs.

Mr. BECKER: The Minister buckled under pressure. It has been recognised that there are two statements in the Royal Commission's first report and its second report. The Commission brought down its opinion, but the people in Novar Gardens formed an action committee. They did their homework and presented probably one of the best documents the Minister received from ratepayers.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: They wouldn't let you introduce the deputation; that's how much they thought of you.

Mr. BECKER: Because they did not want you to be able to accuse me of playing politics.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: They didn't want you involved so that you would destroy their case. That's what they were frightened of.

Mr. BECKER: You played petty politics, but you buckled under pressure. As reported in the newspaper on August 14, I told the meeting that I would be willing to introduce a deputation to you, and you knew it was coming.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member knows what is required of him. The word "you" is not permissible.

Mr. BECKER: I am sorry, Sir, it should be the honourable Minister. I would not want to insult the sheep of this country! The honourable Minister knew that the whole plot was unfolded there and then. Now, the people have been reprieved. The Minister may laugh: he knows that Dr. Jennings is a member of his Party and that there have been moves for some time to have him stand against me in my district.

Mr. Payne: Have you nominated our candidate already?

Mr. BECKER: The member for Mitchell, the unofficial Country Party organiser for Eyre, is not fully conversant with the conspiracy that has been going on behind the scenes. That is unfortunate, because for some time I have been aware that a candidate has been endorsed who is not a supporter of the Minister. He is a supporter of the Premier, and the Minister has missed out because the candidate will not support him. The member for Adelaide is the architect and engineer behind this move. Unfortunately for the Labor Party and the Minister, Dr. Jennings happens to be our family doctor. During his involvement in local government he has stirred up his own Party more than anyone else has, because he has made statements reported in newspapers in relation to the Royal Commission report, and probably no other councillor has been criticised as much as Dr. Jennings has been criticised. However, he has stuck to his convictions throughout the whole issue.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What do you hold against him?

Mr. BECKER: You get pretty petty.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Why blame him for that. The fact that you are a dill should not reflect on him.

Mr. BECKER: The Minister has proved how punchy he is on some issues and how ridiculous he can get. We know what is behind the reports. It comes back to an obsession for many years, when the Minister (and I think I am correct), as a shadow Minister in this place, severely criticised the Liberal and Country League for endorsing candidates for the Adelaide City Council. He waged a vicious campaign against my Party in those days and forced it to reconsider the whole situation.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Was I to blame?

Mr. BECKER: I stand to be corrected, but I believe I am right.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It was my campaign that made them capitulate?

Mr. BECKER: I believe it was, but for the Minister's Party that was a great mistake because we know that the A.L.P. for many years has wanted to control local government. We know of its efforts to control the West Torrens council. Fortunately, however, that council has survived and has come out strongly on the boundaries issue, and it will go from strength to strength. It is fortunate that we have a council the size of West Torrens with excellent officers and most efficient and community-minded councillors serving the ratepayers of that district. It is a council that can be proud of what it has done in respect of local government boundaries.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What about the Glenelg council?

Mr. BECKER: As a ratepayer of the Glenelg council, I understand the disappointment of that council because its application to extend its boundaries (and it can move only north, east, or south) in those directions has been rejected.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Why are you laughing about that?

Mr. BECKER: I am not laughing: the Minister should not do as the member for Mitcham does, and make stupid and inane interjections so that he is recorded in *Hansard* and can say, "Look at what I said." I am a wake-up to the Minister and I know the Minister will—

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: They will love to hear this. It will look really good.

Mr. BECKER: My friend the member for Spence will make sure it appears in the *Herald*.

Mr. Crimes: Your friend! Take it back! How dare you!

Mr. BECKER: My friend is very kind to me, and perhaps one day I may make him my press officer to help him out on his superannuation.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: You don't think he will serve you, do you? You have a false impression of human nature.

Mr. BECKER: The Minister is not happy about the whole situation, but we know of the obsession of this Government to control local government completely. I believe it has been a 40-year obsession of the A.L.P. Indeed it goes back even farther than that, even before the official formation of the A.L.P. We can go back to 1866 (just before the member for Spence was born) when a political association was formed by miners in the Wallaroo-Moonta area.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must realise that we are discussing a certain Bill. If the honourable member does not wish to speak to it, his privilege to speak will be withdrawn.

Mr. BECKER: I am sorry to hear that, Mr. Speaker, because I am linking up my remarks with the reasons surrounding the need for a Royal Commission to inquire into local government boundaries, and I was about to relate that in 1866 there was an association of workers

whose idea was to promote interest in municipal elections as well as in Parliamentary elections. That is all part and parcel of the reason for the introduction of this legislation, because it means that, although some council areas have had a reprieve, there is no guarantee that at any time in future these areas will not be reduced further. It can be virtually guaranteed that many of these councils will disappear, if the present Government remains in office in this State. So, the people of South Australia know that they cannot trust the present Minister or his Government, because it is his intention and his Party's intention to completely annihilate local government in South Australia, and this report will go down in history as the beginning of the end of local government in this State.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What would you do about West Beach, which is in your district?

Mr. BECKER: It is somewhat late for Question Time. As the member for Fisher has said, a public meeting is to be held in the Henley and Grange council area next Friday evening, and the Minister for Environment and Conservation (the member for Henley Beach) has been invited to attend to debate the issue with a council representative. As this is in the Henley Beach District, it is that Minister's concern, but the residents in the small part of Henley and Grange council area that is in my district are satisfied with the legislation now before us.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: Two-bob-each-way Becker.

Mr. BECKER: I have always thought that the Minister was outdated: we changed to decimal currency several years ago. Also, I have never been one to have a little each way, as the Minister knows. I made my stand in late 1971, after several meetings of ratepayers had been held at West Beach, which came under the Henley and Grange council, and the people in that area clearly indicated that they wanted to secede to the West Torrens council.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: And you supported them?

Mr. BECKER: It is the policy and philosophy of the Liberal Party, of which I am proud to be a member and of which I have always been a member, that we are responsible to our constituents. Being responsible to them, I supported the wishes of the majority of the people, which the Minister initially would not recognise after the release of the Commission's first and second reports. However, he buckled under pressure and bowed to the wishes of the people, and, if necessary, I shall repeat that again, again, and again.

The SPEAKER: Order! A Standing Order prohibits repetition, and I call the honourable member's attention to it.

Mr. BECKER: In view of the interest shown by my constituents and the wishes that have been accepted, I support the Bill at the second reading stage. However, I hope that the Minister will not bulldoze the Bill through the Select Committee but treat it as expeditiously as possible. I recognise certain problems. In his second reading explanation the Minister said:

This Bill does not, of its own force, create new council areas. If the Bill is passed the Commission will then inquire into consequential matters such as the definition of wards, by-laws, division of assets and liabilities, staff, council names, and so on.

In those areas the real work has yet to be done and many headaches and problems have to be cured. The amount of work involved will be tremendous. I hope the Minister is sincere and does not treat this matter as a joke, in the same way he has treated the whole debate. I trust he will get on with the job.

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): So that the Minister has a complete record on the scoreboard he

is keeping, I indicate my support of the Bill so that it may be referred to a Select Committee. The Minister has shifted ground persistently on this matter. On November 29, 1973 (at page 2099 of *Hansard*), when the Minister was asked what course he would take, he said:

I expect that the Commission's report will be available towards the middle of 1974 and I will certainly make it available for public consideration before I introduce a Bill to give effect to the recommendations.

If one goes through newspaper reports of the Minister's announcements since last March on this vital issue, one finds that it was to be the recommendations of the first report. Later, under pressure, those recommendations were to be changed by the second report. Then the Minister found it necessary to alter his position once again and, subsequently, he said there would be an alteration to allow for eight new metropolitan councils and nine new country councils—a decision not present in either of the Commissions two reports.

I am pleased that the Minister has seen fit to make changes required by people in the community who have applied themselves to this vital issue, which goes right back to the individual in the local community. However, I am uncertain whether the Minister's decisions are adequate, and that is why I believe the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. I acknowledge that the Minister has said for some time that the Bill would be referred to a Select Committee; this was a change of stance he took, but a Select Committee was not mentioned in the Minister's original replies about the implementation of the legislation. Several councils that believe they are viable can see councils of similar size and similar financial viability that have been reprieved by Ministerial, Cabinet or Caucus decision. It is only right that these people should be given the opportunity of expressing themselves before the Select Committee.

I represent an area that saw the first of what I might term modern-day amalgamations, namely, that between the Kapunda corporation and the Kapunda District Council. At that time, in about 1962, the councils got together and, by agreement, effected a change that has been of considerable advantage to the ratepayers of those two local government authorities. Burra corporation and Burra District Council, Maitland Council and other councils have subsequently taken the same steps as taken at Kapunda. Many local councils will obtain benefit from amalgamation, even if they now cannot accept the idea.

I have already told the Minister that I did not believe he would accept the recommendations and introduce a Bill, because he lacked the courage to implement the Commissioner's recommendations. That has been borne out by the fact that the number of councils has been increased from 74 to 88. We now have a situation where several councils would, given the same opportunities as those councils in New South Wales that were affected by the Barnett report, see the virtues of amalgamation. Perhaps the catalyst in this instance will be the appearance of certain councils before the Select Committee. It is essential for many local government bodies to alter their boundaries. I have confirmed that view in pre-election proposals, and I have repeated it elsewhere. Indeed, I have made that statement in my own district, where I find the council of which I have previously been the Mayor and a councillor is to be greatly increased in size through the acquisition of land from four adjacent councils. Further, I put forward the same suggestion as a councillor, and it is a plan which surrounding councils had come to expect and even to accept. However, in several instances, these councils resent the area to be taken by the Gawler corporation. Such matters

should be considered by the Select Committee, and I am sure the District Councils of Mudla Wirra, Munno Para, Freeling, and Barossa, will appear before it.

I believe that during the deliberations of the Select Committee we will see an acceptance of some proposals now contained in this Bill. However, these are recommendations not contained in the twenty-fifth schedule. Altered council boundaries in the council areas of Gawler, Barossa, Tanunda and Angaston do not even appear on any of the three maps comprising the twenty-fifth schedule. True, that may be an oversight or it may have resulted from pressures on the Minister or his advisers, who may have been unable to obtain a more accurate map before the presentation of the schedule, but it is essential that the Minister recognise and accept that there has been a failure to indicate adequately to several local councils exactly what boundary changes are being considered. No clear boundary is depicted in respect of the suggested Gawler corporation area. For these reasons I ask the Minister to examine the twenty-fifth schedule.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: It was provided that minor alterations should be made.

Dr. EASTICK: No boundary is depicted. I accept that minor variations are necessary in respect of Rosedale and similar places, but the Minister will see from examination of the twenty-fifth schedule that no boundary is depicted to show what will be the greater Gawler area, and the area to remain as the balance of the Barossa area and of the Freeling council area. I have clearly indicated my position in this matter, and I look forward to hearing from the Minister and other Government members who will be supporting him. Of course, we know from the Premier's statement that the whole of the Government side will be supporting the Minister, because Government members are not permitted a vote based on their own conscience: there will be no attempt to allow that.

Mr. Crimes: That's not true.

Dr. EASTICK: It is true. No Government member has indicated that he will disobey that direction. However, if it takes two months or if it takes six months for the Select Committee to consider this matter properly, I believe it is only right and proper that adequate time be made available. If the Minister refuses or in any other way tries to remove the opportunity of those who seek to appear before the Select Committee, I will support any action to defeat the Bill on third reading.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham): I oppose the Bill. Having listened to much of the debate on it, I believe that the time has come when we make up our minds one way or the other: either we favour the recommendations of the Royal Commission, as revised, or we vote against the whole scheme. I cannot see what point there is in referring the matter to a Select Committee. Indeed, if we do that, we will never come to a conclusion on this matter. I think that all members (and I point especially to members on this side) ought to have the courage of their convictions.

Mr. Jennings: They should have more convictions.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Some of them deserve that comment whether they have them or not. I remember well that a few months ago, when the Minister was rather more secure on this matter than he has been recently, he said outright in this House that the matter would be decided in Parliament, that that was the place where the matter should be decided. Then there was no question of going back over the findings of the Royal Commission, no question of a Select Committee, and no question of any backing down at all. It was to be put to the test here, and in another place.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That's what is happening now.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Of course, the Minister's situation has been rather weakened in his own Party, and even in Cabinet, since then, and he has had, to a degree, to back down.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: How would you know?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I will not support any sort of compromise that the Minister may put up here by supporting a move for a Select Committee. After much consideration, I have concluded that the Bill should be opposed, and that is what I am going to do. I may say to the member for Alexandra that it was when I was on Kangaroo Island a couple of weeks ago that I came to that conclusion. I was talked to by several people over there, and I found that they had no desire whatever to see an amalgamation between the District Council of Kingscote and the District Council of Dudley. I cannot see why we should force people to join together if they do not want to. That is the antithesis of my political beliefs, and I will not be a party to it if I can avoid it. It was during that week on Kangaroo Island that I concluded that this Bill should be opposed. For that, I must thank the honourable member's constituents, even if I do not thank him. How on earth can a Select Committee put right the complaints of, for example, the Henley and Grange council? Of course, it cannot be done. I know perfectly well there are several members on this side who have said they support a Select Committee but who really want to see the Bill thrown out altogether. I believe (and this is really why I am speaking) that the Leader of the Opposition said as much a moment ago, because he said he would vote against the Bill on the third reading if he was not satisfied. He left himself a good let out. A few moments ago the member for Hanson mentioned my name.

*Members interjecting:*

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I have never met Dr. Jennings; I am interested to hear the member for Hanson mention him. One thing that has been reported to me about that member (I cannot vouch for it because I was not present but it was reported to me reliably) is that he said at one of the public meetings in his district that no-one need worry about this Bill going through, because his friends in the Legislative Council would see that it was defeated eventually, whatever might happen to it. I was interested tonight, bearing that in mind, to hear him say that he supported setting up a Select Committee. One wonders how genuine he is in what he has said and how genuine are other members of his Party who are supporting a Select Committee. I reject altogether the idea of a Select Committee; it would be a complete and absolute waste of time.

The only other thing I want to mention is something that the member for Mitchell and I have in common—the Garden Suburb of Colonel Light Gardens. I believe it is inevitable that the Garden Suburb should be incorporated again in the city of Mitcham. When I say “again”, as honourable members know, it was originally carved out of the old District Council of Mitcham in 1919 or 1920. Going back as far as that, it was contemplated that at some stage it would be reincorporated, and I believe that the founders of the scheme thought it would happen long since, but it has not yet happened. However, we do not need any Royal Commission to do that: the Government can do it at any time it likes by having a proclamation made under the Garden Suburb Act. That is what I believe should happen. I believe (I make this point strongly, and here I agree with something that the member for Fisher said at the tail end of his speech) that some compensation should be paid to the

city of Mitcham for the reincorporation of the Garden Suburb within its area, because it is undeniable that in many ways the facilities and amenities of the Garden Suburb are below those of the surrounding district.

However, that is another point, and is entirely irrelevant to this Bill, because there is power under the Garden Suburb Act. I make clear (and I hope I have made clear) that I oppose the Bill; and I hope all members on this side will oppose it. I believe they would like to; I hope they will have the courage of their convictions and vote against it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Local Government): In reply—

Mr. Gunn: This will be a tirade of abuse.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It will not be a tirade of abuse; it will be an attempt to correct some of the wrongs that have been stated; it will be an attempt to take out of the matter the politics injected by about the last four speakers. I regret that this situation has been reached, because, when I gave the second reading explanation of this Bill, I seriously and conscientiously urged members to look at it on the basis of the benefit to, and the future of, local government. I hold the view, as I always have, that there is no place in local government for Party politics. I have always decried any efforts by any political Party, including the Australian Labor Party, to have politics enter local government. In fact, I was the person who (I cannot give honourable members the actual date) about 10 years ago led the campaign within the Labor Party to defeat the restoration of the rule that provided for the endorsement of A.L.P. candidates in local government. I have never deviated one iota from that attitude, and I never will. I certainly cannot admire any member (I do not care which side of the House he comes from) who tries to make a political football out of this issue, as, regrettably, has happened tonight.

Mr. Chapman: It happened before tonight.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You have mucked around with the recommendations.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If honourable members would just keep quiet and contain themselves a little while, I will try to give them the information they seek. If they are going to carry on with some sort of rabble, as if it was a Liberal Party meeting, they will get nothing.

Mr. Chapman: Keep politics out of it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I hope the member for Alexandra will keep politics out of it, because I have a few things to say about his contribution.

Mr. Chapman: Well, get on with it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The first thing I want to say out of respect for people who have been waiting a long time to hear it—

Mr. Chapman: Good!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: —is this, and I hope the member will acknowledge the requests of his Whip not to interject: I want to make plain that, when the Select Committee has completed its task and reports back to this Parliament, as it will be required to do if the second reading stage is passed—and, from the tally I have taken tonight, it seems obvious that it will pass—

Mr. Goldsworthy: Are you a bit thin on your side?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The only thing thin on the other side is the mentality of some members, including the one who has just interjected. Assuming the Bill is then passed by the Legislative Council, I will then require the Royal Commission to give effect to the decisions that Parliament has reached. In doing so, I repeat now for the public record—

Mr. Venning: Ha, ha!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It may be a point of humour for the member for Rocky River, but it would not be humorous to the people concerned. I repeat that no person currently engaged in local government will suffer unemployment. If that is something of humour to the member for Rocky River, I hope he enjoys the joke of it. For the sake of the record, I say that the Government has previously given the undertaking that I repeat tonight, with the authority of the Government, that no person who is currently engaged in local government will suffer as a result of any changes brought about by the Bill.

Mr. Chapman: Will they continue to be engaged in local government?

Mr. Crimes: What did he say?

Mr. Chapman: This is important. He said they would continue to be employed but where?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I suggest that members opposite brief a solicitor, put someone in the witness box, cross-examine him and have it spelt out in single-syllable words. I do not know how I can make it any clearer, because I have said all this in the second reading explanation, if members opposite cared to take the trouble of reading it.

Mr. Venning: That doesn't mean anything.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It does not mean anything to the member for Rocky River, because he has not got the intelligence to read it. However, it does mean something to those in local government to know that, if the Bill is passed and its provisions are implemented, the Government will take the opportunity of employing on its Local Government Office staff some of the more prominent officers who, as a result of these changes, will have to change their jobs, thereby enabling that office to provide a better service to local government. If that means that those persons are employed in local government, in accordance with the request of the member for Alexandra, the answer is "Yes" and, if it does not, the answer is "No". Let all honourable members put their own interpretation on the matter. All I am saying is that no person currently engaged in local government will be put out of work as a result of this Bill and, if that is not plain to all members opposite, I suggest that they obtain the services of an interpreter. Let us leave that matter alone for a moment and stop pettifogging on those sorts of issue.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Where is more—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will deal with the honourable member for Kavel in a minute—

Mr. Goldsworthy: Good!

Mr. Chapman: But—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will also deal with the member for Alexandra, if he can contain himself. I know he is wrapped up in this matter because, like the member for Mitcham, I am sure he would like the Bill defeated. He said he would vote against it, anyway.

Mr. Chapman: Yes, I did.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It is interesting to look up the tally sheet I kept. I heard (I do not think most, but certainly many) Opposition members say that we must get to know the views of the people. We must get to know not the views of councillors or ratepayers but those of the people! How many councils sought the views of the people? How many members opposite speaking for or against the Bill were expressing views that their constituents had expressed to them.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I was.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The honourable member was? Mr. Goldsworthy: I certainly was.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will return to that matter shortly. Let us assume that everyone was. I found that nine Opposition members spoke against the Bill and will, presumably, vote against it. I shall be interested to see whether my records are straight when the division is called for, as I hope it will be. To ensure that my record is correct, I will name the members who said they would vote against the Bill and not even allow it to go to a Select Committee. They were the members for Mitcham, Kavel, Victoria, Davenport, Alexandra, Flinders, Goyder, Rocky River and Frome.

Mr. Evans: You're wrong.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Please correct me if I am wrong, because I do not want the record wrong.

Mr. Evans: The member for Flinders didn't.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Very well, the member for Flinders comes off that list. Thank you. With the deletion of the member for Flinders, I now have a record of eight Opposition members who will vote against the Bill.

Mr. Chapman: If you keep that up, there will be a few more on it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Members opposite can please themselves. On the other side of the ledger, we have 10 Opposition members supporting the Bill. I hope members opposite will correct me if I have made another mistake.

Dr. Eastick: Ten and eight don't make 21, for a start.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: That is marvellous! Let us put the Leader at the top of the class: he is a genius that has been undiscovered! The members who said they would support the Bill were the member for Glenelg, at the back of the Chamber, and the member for Hanson, who has apparently left us after making all his wild, lying allegations. I hope he will return to the Chamber, as I want to accuse him of being a complete and deliberate liar.

*Members interjecting:*

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the member for Hanson is going to come into this Chamber and tell lies, I am entitled to say so.

*Members interjecting:*

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The members who said they would support the Bill were the members for Hanson, Glenelg, Fisher—

Mr. Evans: That surprised you.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It did. There were also the members for Eyre, Heysen, Gouger, Bragg, Torrens, and Light. Of course, I now add to that list the member for Flinders, as a result of which I get an interesting figure.

Mr. Mathwin: Why didn't you work out your horoscope?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The member for Glenelg may care to work out his horoscope, because, during his contribution to the debate, he had the audacity, as did some other Opposition members, to talk about the democratic rights of the people. One finds that the democratic rights of the people are—

Mr. Mathwin: You're getting carried away. I never mentioned it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am terribly sorry if I accused the member for Glenelg of talking about the democratic rights of the people.

Mr. Mathwin: You're getting carried away.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I was giving him the benefit of the doubt that he knew what the democratic rights of the people were. Obviously, he does not know. Let me tell honourable members opposite what their actions tonight have meant in a democratic fashion.

Mr. Venning: Would you give us the score?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Yes, a total of eight members, including the member for Rocky River, opposed the second reading of the Bill so that a Select Committee could be constituted. Those eight members represent 72 665 electors. However, the 10 Opposition members who said they supported the Bill were speaking on behalf of 137 983 electors. Let us not, therefore, talk about so many members being in favour and so many members being against equal voting! Let us look at the will of the people. The moment we do that, we find the hollowness of the opposition from members opposite.

Mr. Goldsworthy: That's pathetic.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I know it must be pathetic to the honourable member, who told us about all the people in his district who opposed the Bill. He told us about the petitions that had been signed and the views of the people. However, he forgot to tell us about one thing. I bet he is kicking himself now for forgetting it and that, when he sat down he said to himself, "Gee, I wish I had said that." What he forgot is a report in the *Barossa and Light Herald* of August 15, headed "Winemakers in favour", as follows:

The idea of one local government to do for the Barossa and in particular the wine industry areas was unanimously endorsed by wine members present at last Friday's annual general meeting of the Barossa Winemakers Association.

Whenever one goes to the Barossa, the first thing one is shown by the councils is the wonderful asset of the wineries, and they are a great asset. Privately, the councils will say how the wineries really provide the lion's share of council revenue. The member for Kavel spoke about all the people who signed a petition saying that they did not want to see the Commission's recommendations adopted, but a newspaper report was drawn to my attention, on the day that I was in the Barossa area with the member for Kavel, the Leader and several other members, stating that the winemakers agreed with the recommendations of the Commission. The member for Kavel would be the first to acknowledge that the winemakers are well versed in the mechanics of operating a modern business organisation, and well equipped to carry out such an operation. Yet, the inference can be drawn from his remarks that the winemakers do not know what they are talking about. He is not willing to support the Bill to the stage of its being referred to a Select Committee so that the matter can be reviewed. He wants the matter decided on the basis that he is right and we are wrong, with no reconciliation attempted at all. That is typical of the attitude he displays time and time again. That newspaper report proves that he does not speak on behalf of all the people in his district.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Did you read the subsequent report?

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: I am pleased to see that the member for Hanson has come back.

Mr. Becker: Are you going to insult me?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: No, I am not going to insult the honourable member; I am just going to ask him to tell the truth when he speaks in this House.

Mr. Becker: You should be the last one to talk.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In his tirade of abuse this evening, which had little to do with the Bill or matters before the House, the honourable member said that Dr. Jennings was brought before the State Council of the Australian Labor Party to answer for his appearances at a public meeting at Novar Gardens. That is a complete lie. Anyone who repeats statements of that type is nothing more than a blatant liar. The member for Hanson has either been led up the garden path by an idiot or is himself an idiot.

Mr. Becker: You're calling Dr. Jennings an idiot.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: No.

Mr. Becker: Which organisation did you call him up before?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am a member of the State Executive of the A.L.P.

Mr. Gunn: Bully for you!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am proud of it. I do not hide my light behind a bushel, as many Liberal Party members do. I am a member of the A.L.P. State Executive. I am also a delegate to the State Council of the A.L.P., which meets monthly. I can tell all members, including the member for Hanson—

Mr. Chapman: It's incredible how you keep politics out of the debate on this Bill!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: —that his allegation that Dr. Jennings has been called before either the State Executive or the State Council, or in fact any other organisation of the A.L.P., is completely untrue and typical of the rumour mongering in which the honourable member delights in engaging.

Mr. Becker: Rubbish! That's your tactic.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the honourable member accepts what I have just said, I would hope he would have the guts to seek in this place to have his reference withdrawn from *Hansard*, but I do not think he has the guts.

Mr. Becker: I have enough guts to take you on any time.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Let us see whether the honourable member has the guts to correct statements that are wrong.

Mr. Becker: You're not saying what Jennings—

The SPEAKER: Order! This heat in the debate is unnecessary at this time of the morning.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Your members won't withdraw. Jack Wright called me a liar, and I found where Cameron made the statement.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Personalities should be kept right out of this debate.

*Members interjecting:*

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am bringing them in only when complete untruths have been uttered in this House.

Mr. Becker: You started it, and you got what you deserved.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I know the honourable member is very worried. I think he should know that, unlike the practice in the Liberal Party, A.L.P. candidates that have been endorsed retain their endorsement. The candidate for the next election is Mr. Groom—

Mr. Becker: I know that.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the Bill about candidates.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will leave this matter, as I think the member for Hanson has been discredited sufficiently. Let me now turn to the member for Eyre. Again, I regret bringing personalities into the debate, but I make plain that I have the greatest respect for all three members of the Royal Commission, including Mr. Keith Hockridge.

Dr. Eastick: And that's what he said.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am afraid that he did not.

Dr. Eastick: You read it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be delighted to do so, but my interpretation of what the honourable member said was that, although he said he respected the members of the Royal Commission, he regretted that I should have appointed someone from my office. That statement can only be regarded as a slur on the person appointed from

my office, and that was Mr. Hockridge. I shall be delighted to read in *Hansard* tomorrow what the honourable member said, and I assure the Leader that, if I have misinterpreted what the member for Eyre said, I shall be the first to acknowledge that to him. I make plain that I have the highest regard for Keith Hockridge, not only as Secretary for Local Government but also as a Commissioner.

Dr. Eastick: So have we.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I do not think it helps the debate to bring in personalities of this type and to make slurs. I hope that the member for Eyre did not do this; I join with the Leader in that hope. I turn now to the point raised by the Leader about what has been said concerning what we would do with the report.

Dr. Eastick: The Minister should consult *Hansard*, page 2099, of November 29, 1973.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The report had not been produced then.

Dr. Eastick: It had been commissioned.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The report was probably laid on the table of this House on July 23, the first sitting day of this session. At page 130 of *Hansard*, on July 30, 1974, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me about the Government's intention. I replied:

When I have previously been asked what procedure will be followed, I have said (and I repeat now) that the report will be laid on the table of the House for a sufficient time to enable members of this Parliament, members of councils, and other interested people to examine and formulate a view on the report. That undertaking was complied with last Tuesday when the report was laid on the table in both Houses. I cannot indicate at this stage when the required legislative action will be taken, because that will have to be determined initially by Cabinet. However, it is fair to say that all Cabinet members would hold the view (and I believe the same view would be held by most people) that, if the report is to be adopted—

I ask members to note that—

it ought to be adopted as soon as possible.

I do not deviate one iota from that. My reply continues:

The longer the present situation is left in limbo the greater will be the degree of uncertainty. It is also in the interests of all concerned that the matter be dealt with soon. Unfortunately, I cannot give any further indication of the time necessary to implement the legislation but, in due course, I hope to give notice that a Bill will be introduced.

Dr. Eastick: Would you care to read out page 2099 of 1973 *Hansard*?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be pleased to do so. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me a question on November 29, 1973, when, of course, the Royal Commission was still in progress and when we did not have its report or any idea of its contents. It must be taken in that context.

Dr. Tonkin: Stop making excuses.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am sorry if I have taken the whipping horse away from the honourable member, but that is a fact of life. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked:

Can the Minister of Local Government say what progress the Royal Commission inquiring into local government boundaries has made and when he thinks that the report of the Commission will be available? Further, will the Minister say whether he intends to release the report, especially as it relates to boundaries, to councils and other interested parties, so that comments or objections may be lodged before a Bill is introduced in this House?

That was a pretty good question, to which I replied:

The Royal Commission inquiring into local government boundaries is making good progress. The last report to me, which certainly was made no more than a week ago, indicated that at that stage the Commission had completed its consultations with councils in the inner metropolitan

area, that it was well on the way regarding councils in the outer metropolitan area, and that it was proceeding well with plans to receive representations from country areas. I expect that the Commission's report will be available towards the middle of 1974—

that turned out to be right—

and I will certainly make it available for public consideration before I introduce a Bill to give effect to the recommendations.

What is the point? That is exactly what we are doing now.

Dr. Eastick: That is what I quoted. This is not a Bill that follows the recommendations.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: What the Leader is now saying is that the Government should produce a report, issue it to local government and the public at large, invite them to comment, and then say, "We are not interested in any of your comments. We will do exactly what the Commission says." In other words, the Leader says that we should not listen to public opinion.

Dr. Eastick: You were not going to do that.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I did not say we would not listen to public opinion. If the Leader had listened to the reply I gave to the Deputy Leader in July, he would know exactly what I said. I know that members opposite are really upset that they have had the dummy pulled out of their mouths.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You mean that you put your foot in your mouth.

Mr. McRae: Members opposite hate Mr. Hockridge because he was in the State Taxes Department.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I want to have a very brief word on the comments of the member for Fisher, who really baited his hook as best he could, but he did not get very many bites. He spoke about efficiency and claimed that, simply because a council was large, it did not mean that it would be more efficient than a small council. I wish he had read clauses 8a, 8b and 8c, on pages 17 and 18 of the Royal Commission's second report. In those clauses the Royal Commission says exactly what the honourable member has said tonight: a large council is not necessarily more efficient than a small council, nor is a small council necessarily less efficient than a large one. The efficiency of the council depends on its officers and members; that is in the report. This brings me back to the point I have been attempting to make every time I have got on my feet on this question. I have urged members, please, to take an hour or so and read the two reports. I believe that 90 per cent of the criticism offered is adequately answered by the Royal Commission.

Mr. McRae: Members opposite will not do their homework.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: No, and they rave on and on and on. The member for Hanson referred to Novar Gardens. I want to put it on record that, when the representatives (I do not remember their official positions) of the Novar Gardens group contacted my office, they were given immediate accommodation in connection with an interview. They came in and presented a very well documented case. I was very interested to hear what they said, and I was equally interested and perhaps satisfied to read the newsletter that they put out in the area. All of the residents said how pleased they were at the reception they received from the Minister and the sympathetic consideration he had given to them. That is in contrast to the picture painted by the member for Hanson.

Mr. Becker: I never criticised them.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: There is nothing more to say about that, because the honourable member had nothing worth while to say in his speech. I congratulate the

member for Eyre because, from the time the member for Torrens opened the debate on behalf of the Opposition, the member for Eyre was the first member who adopted what I believe is the correct attitude to this question. I think almost every Opposition member, except the member for Eyre, looked at this question in the parish-pump area of "How will it affect me? If it is not going to help me, I will vote against it; not on the basis that it will go to a Select Committee so that benefits will flow to other areas, but let us get it amended so that we will not suffer the problems in the area with which I am concerned." The member for Eyre showed promise when he referred to the fact that it was not a matter of looking at this on a district basis but that we had to look at it on a State basis.

Mr. McAnaney: So did I.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the member for Heysen had the same attitude, I apologise to him, but not many Opposition members adopted that attitude. The member for Bragg referred to a referendum that should be held not only for ratepayers but also for citizens.

Dr. Tonkin: No!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: You did not say that?

Dr. Tonkin: No.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I didn't say what you said I said, either.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Obviously, the member for Bragg does not believe that people should be considered. If that is the situation, I will leave it at that.

Dr. Eastick: You are so far in you don't know how to get out.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The member for Davenport referred to the hills face zone being attached to a rural area such as East Torrens and said that it was wrong for it to be attached to a metropolitan area because times might change and one might find subdivision occurring.

Mr. Dean Brown: I didn't say that.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I suggest that the honourable member read page 17 of the second report in which paragraph 4 (5) refers to that matter. The Commission considered it and weighed the evidence, and to say, as the honourable member said in his usual arrogant way, that the Commission ignored a request is typical of the misrepresentation that has been made. The Commission did not ignore a submission from anyone: it might not have agreed with the submission, but ignoring and not agreeing are totally different things. The Commission could not agree with the submissions of everyone because so many were at variance one with the other. The honourable member also spoke about the Democratic Action Committee, and I do not think he will refute that statement. However, he did not read some of the salient points of the circular sent out by that committee.

Mr. Gunn: Who are they?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I suggest that the honourable member inquire of some of his colleagues and he will find out who are the members of that committee. I will read the last paragraph of that circular, and, if any member would like to have it, I will give it to him. This is what the circular states:

I wish to stress that it is the committee's policy not to attack the Royal Commission's report but to oppose the adoption of the report by Parliament.

What a marvellous policy! Do not attack the report because we cannot, but let us put on a turn to prevent it being adopted! Democratic Action Committee! Democratic! It would not know what the word meant. I now refer to what was said by the member for Alexandra. I was delighted to hear him, as a person

who has been involved in local government for a long time, admitting that the report was very sound: he said, "To summarise, generally, I support the Royal Commission's findings." However, he voted against them: he supported the report when speaking in the debate but voted against it. The honourable member also said:

There is much valuable evidence in that report that has not been available to councils since the consolidation of the Act in 1934. It is the first positive attempt by any South Australian Government to assist this area of local government.

Then the honourable member said, "But I oppose the Government's going so far as to direct and dictate to the councils."

Mr. Chapman: Look at my opening remarks.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I heard all of them. The honourable member and other Opposition members should know that, to follow what he has suggested, that is, set up a Royal Commission, say what should be done, present the blueprint to local government, and say, "We commend this; will you go ahead and give effect to it in accordance with the terms of the Local Government Act?" they must realise what is required by the provisions of the Local Government Act.

Mr. Chapman: I know what it desires: that is, a much more qualified Minister to look after it.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The honourable member knows what is required to give effect to this suggestion in accordance with the terms of the Act, and he has admitted that. Therefore, he would know that each of the moves contained in the report constitutes something that, conservatively, may take two to three years to accomplish. This means that, 50 years, 60 years, or even 70 years from now, we will finally be giving effect to all the Commission's recommendations. The last time the Local Government Act revisions were given effect to was in the district of the member for Torrens. Do not take my word for the time, but ask the member for Torrens how long it took from the time the first petition was lodged and the first move was made to remove Vale Park from Enfield and annex it to Walkerville. How long did it take? It took almost five years, and that is what the member for Alexandra is suggesting we ought to do, but it is just not on. If we are going to adopt that attitude, let us be honest at the outset and not even appoint a Royal Commission or waste money and the time of its officers. That is the logical conclusion to draw from the attitude of the member for Alexandra.

Mr Chapman: You are saying that section 26 of the Local Government Act is of no value?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Let me now turn to another matter. The member for Gouger ought to know, if he does not know, that the first letter which came to my office following the release of the Royal Commission's report came from the town of Kadina and states:

We have received today the first report of the Commission in which it is recommended that the District Councils of Bute, Kadina and part of Clinton and the corporations of Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo form one council area. The Kadina corporation for many years has considered that a change in this area was a necessity. I wish to reiterate that this corporation wishes any change affecting this area to be implemented as soon as practicable.

These points are important. Local government is looking for a resolution of this matter. To say that there will be any hotch-potch on the Select Committee, as has been suggested, is an insult to the Government members, as well as the Opposition members who will be represented on it and who will play their part in this matter. I place on record that I am delighted with the selection of Opposition members. As there will be a task to do, the committee will consist of members adequately equipped. I hope, following the passage of the second reading, to appoint the Select Committee and, for members' information, its first meeting will be at 12 noon today. We are not proposing to waste any time. I commend the Bill to members.

The House divided on the second reading:

Ayes (30)—Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Coumbe, Crimes, Duncan, Eastick, Evans, Groth, Gunn, Harrison, Hopgood, Jennings, King, Langley, Mathwin, McAnaney, McKee, McRae, Olson, Payne, Russack, Simmons, Slater, Tonkin, and Virgo (teller).

Noes (6)—Messrs. Allen, Boundy, Chapman, Goldsworthy (teller), Millhouse, and Venning.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Corcoran, Hudson, Wells, and Wright. Noes—Messrs. Dean Brown, Nankivell, Rodda, and Wardle.

Majority of 24 for the Ayes.

Second reading thus carried.

Bill referred to a Select Committee consisting of Messrs. Coumbe, Duncan, Harrison, Russack, and Virgo; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on November 26.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 1.14 a.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 17, at 2 p.m.