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**Title:**

'The other night Bill Smith came to me. He has a housing problem...'

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The other night Bill Smith came to see me. He has a housing problem. Bill and his wife have been living with his parents. They have one baby now and another on the way. If they stay where they are all four of them will have to live in the one tiny room.

"I've had a Housing Trust application in for three years," said Bill, "and yet I go in and go in and they tell me to wait. I can't even get them to say when I'll be considered for a house."

"Well Bill," I said, "it's not very likely that you will get them to say anything. They are still dealing with rental housing applications lodged with them in 1947. Looks like you'll be another three years or so in that room."

"B-but," spluttered Bill, "I heard of a chap who went in to buy a house and he got one within two months."

"He could perhaps have got it in less time than that," I said, "but then he had money to buy. You're only on twelve pounds a week - you can only afford a rental house, and so, as far as the Government is concerned, you can wait." "But we elect the Government to do things for us all - not only for the people with money," said Bill.

"Oh no," I said, "We don't elect the Government at all."

"I'm on the roll," said Bill.

"Yes, but you see that doesn't mean very much in South Australia. Do you know - the people of South Australia have repeatedly voted to turn the Playford regime off the Treasury benches. Yet it's still there. And while it's still there you and people like you are going to get a raw deal. Why? Because the Government doesn't care what you do with your vote. Here in Norwood we have about 18,000 people on the roll. These people have one representative in Parliament - me. Up in Gumeracha there are about 7,000 electors - they also have one representative in Parliament - Tom Playford. By manipulating the electorates so that some have a small number of electors and others a large number of electors, and by giving each of the electorates one representative, they can get the Government elected by a minority of the people - and it is a moneyed minority. That's why the people with money to buy houses

get a better deal than you do. Most of the people who need rental housing are crowded into the metropolitan area of Adelaide. Over sixty per cent of the voters of the state are here in the city. Yet that sixty per cent elects only 13 out of 39 members of the House of Assembly."

"I didn't realise it was that bad," said Bill.

"It's even worse than I've told you so far. Take the district of Port Adelaide. There are over 30,000 electors there. They have one member. As a result of this system he represents more people in Parliament than the Premier, the Minister of Lands, the Minister of Works, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Speaker of the House combined. At the last election Labor had a majority of the popular vote of over 47,000 more than the Liberals polled. Yet the Labor Party has only 14 Members in the House as compared with the Liberals' 21 members!"

"And they call this democracy!" said Bill.

"Yes, though of course they are wise enough never to say what they mean by democracy. That would be too dangerous. I have always believed that Parliament should represent the people - not money, land, cattle, orchards or sheep farms. The Liberals however are not concerned with people - that's why they are not concerned with you. To represent people Parliament must conduct the elections on the principle - one man, one vote, one vote one value. But the Liberals don't believe in that principle. Mr. Flayford says that "one vote one value" is accepted nowhere in the world. Mr. Travers, the member for Torrens, said that counting heads to elect members of Parliament was "nonsense." A former Liberal Senator living here in the electorate once protested to me that you couldn't have the majority deciding on the Government. He said that in his view that would be "mob-rule"!

"So, Bill, the whole key to your housing problem, and the whole key to a lot of other problems in this State is to be found in the simple fact that because of this electoral rigging, the Liberal Government thinks it is safe from the likes of you and me. They consider that we can't turn them out. So why should they care? There is no

reason for them to care, and so they don't. They couldn't care less about you and your children - and we won't alter that until we get back a system of government where the Premier and his Ministers have to pay attention to the needs of the people because otherwise they might be turned out at the next election - until the people are able to decide upon the Government they want."

"Will that ever happen?"

"Yes - I believe it will. But only if sufficient people do sufficient work in the right place. So while I'm making myself a nuisance with the Housing Trust for you, a practical step to providing for your own future is to get out and persuade as many people as you can that at the next elections they must for their own sakes vote only for candidates who are pledged to electoral reform."

The other night Bill Smith came to see me. He has a housing problem. Bill and his wife have been living with his parents. They have one baby now and another on the way. If they stay where they are all four of them will have to live in the one tiny room.

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