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### **Round-the-houses motor racing**

The motor racing burghers of Birmingham, the second city in the kingdom, should ask themselves what they are about. A city is a numerous society and, as Francis Bacon said, 'man seeketh in society, comfort, use and protection'. The word *civility* derives from the idea of a city as providing good-mannered peace. The word *urbane*, linked to urban, has a similar connotation. What is peaceful or urbane about round-the-houses motor racing? The organisers will answer that this philistine innovation received majority support in a poll of citizens. Furthermore, Parliament approved it.

Shame on Parliament! The first test of any democratic system is the effectiveness of its protection of minority interests. No one who unsuspectingly chose to take up residence in the fair city of Birmingham could ever have expected this obscene nuisance to be brought to their very doorstep. It has never before been allowed in England. To have it allowed now reflects our declining values.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 29 August 1986.