

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that the fish arrives either at Geraldton or Fremantle in ice, and that even though it may be in ice for 10 or 12 days, it is perfectly good in flavour. Packed in ice it does not lose its flavour at all; but when put into freezing chambers, where it may be kept for a considerable time, it soon puts on a different character, loses its flavour, and is no longer so good an article of diet as it should be. No doubt a good deal can be done in the way of improving the marketing facilities. I will bring that matter under notice. I am sorry I cannot support the report because of the nature of its recommendations. I am not in a position to support Government trawlers at present. I do not think the Government should take over the Fremantle fish markets, but I do think there should be a more equitable arrangement in regard to them. Then there is the proposal for a board—

A board should be constituted, giving equal representation to the Government and the fishermen, with an independent chairman—such board to control the fishing industry.

In New South Wales there was at one time a board known as the Commission of Fisheries. That was abandoned, and a board known as the Board of Fisheries, having on it a representative of the fishermen, was appointed. But after some experience that too was abandoned, and the administration of fisheries in New South Wales is now under a chief inspector, very much in the same way as here. The third recommendation of the select committee's report reads—

Regularity of supply to the public should be provided by the methods hereinbefore set forth.

Those methods start with the purchase of a trawler, and I am not prepared to support that proposal at the present time. The other recommendations of the select committee will receive careful consideration.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon debate adjourned.

BILL — GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.36] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill, regulating the authorised rate of interest on inscribed stock and debentures to the 31st December, 1923. From time to time, since the rate of interest went up, the maximum rate that the Government should be allowed to pay has been fixed; and, by the decision of this House in the first instance, it has been fixed for one year only. The authority obtained last session fixed the maximum rate at 6½ per cent., and that was limited to the 31st December, 1922. The

amendment Act in question has now expired, and therefore we go back to the original Act under which the maximum rate is fixed at 4 per cent. Each amendment Act has been for a period only. As soon as an amendment Act expires, we revert to the 4 per cent. The present Bill provides for 6 per cent. as a maximum rate at the end of the present year. It is anticipated that the loans will be placed in London at about 5 per cent., or locally at about 5½ per cent. Our last London loans were for three millions at £95 and 6 per cent., equal to £6 12s. per cent., and two millions at £96 and 5 per cent., equal to £5 9s. 6d. Our last local loan was at 6 per cent. at par. The last New South Wales loan was at 4½ per cent. and £91, the underwriters taking 93 per cent. New South Wales has recognised the necessity for offering a slightly higher rate in connection with the loan now on the London market. New Zealand floated a loan of five millions at 5 per cent. at par. The Commonwealth recently issued a 5 per cent. loan of five millions at £96. Therefore I think the 6 per cent. proposed by this Bill is a sufficient and reasonable maximum to be fixed for our State loans for the current year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.
On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 23rd January, 1923.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—TRAFFIC SIGNALLING.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: 1, In order to prevent as far as possible accidents with travelling vehicles after sunset, will he consider the advisability of adopting some such patent as the Clement's

patent lamp in lieu of projecting the arm?
2, If not, for what reason or reasons?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 and 2, The matter is under consideration.

QUESTION—RAILWAY EXTENSION, NAREMBEEN.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that rails and fastenings have been ordered for the Narembeen railway extension? 2, When is it anticipated this work will be commenced? 3, Has his attention been drawn to a paragraph in the Commissioner of Railways report of 1923 under the heading "Railways under construction and projected," on page 4, dealing with the inconvenience of working that section of the line from Narrogin to Narembeen? 4, What is the intention of the Government in this matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Under consideration. 3, Yes. 4, Under consideration.

RESOLUTION—COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had passed the following resolution and desiring the concurrence of the Assembly therein:—

That in the opinion of this House the Premier should communicate with the Commonwealth and State Governments and urge the summoning of a constitutional convention to consider the amending of the Commonwealth Constitution.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's modification of the Council's amendment No. 4.

BILL—JARNADUP-DENMARK RAILWAY.

Council's Amendments.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill, subject to amendments.

BILL—INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Mann (for Mr. Money) read a first time.

BILL—MINER'S PHTHISIS.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 1.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, the word "January," in line 2, struck out and "March" inserted in lieu.

Bill reported with a further amendment.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 5th December, 1922.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [2.39]: It is with a certain amount of diffidence that I approach the debate on the second reading of the Bill.

The Premier: You are not opposing it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think any person who has the best interests of the State at heart will support the Bill. It has been customary in connection with electoral reform throughout the world, to place greater power in the hands of the people. In almost every other part of the world to-day people realise that they are the prime factors of government, that they are responsible for the making and unmaking of Parliaments, and that no Government can be successful unless they are supported by a majority of the people. That being so, it should be expected in Western Australia, which is, or should be, one of the most progressive parts of the world in these times, that in bringing forward any measure of electoral reform, the Government should benefit from the examples set by other parts of the world. The Bill, however, represents a retrograde step. It is not intended to allow a majority of the people to have a voice in the control of the State. On the contrary, it is clearly set out that the future government of Western Australia must be controlled by a minority. That demonstrates that here at least no Government will be successful regarding the rights of the people. I regret that the Government have made the Bill a party measure. It should not be dealt with in that way. It should be left open for a free discussion on the part of hon. members, who should be permitted to vote in what they consider the best way in the interests of those people whom they represent. I do not believe that the Government gave more than 15 or 20 minutes to deciding the issues of the Bill. I do not think they gave it much consideration at all. I feel confident that there

are many members of this Chamber who hold progressive views, and that they are prepared to give the Bill the consideration it deserves. If they are given the opportunity to do that, they will not pledge their support to the Bill as it stands to-day. There is a phase of the electoral question which I regard as very serious. There is a great demand throughout Australia to-day for what may be termed "unification." The leaders of all political parties have made it clear that they desire unification.

The Minister for Mines: It all depends what you mean by that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some people make out that they want only a degree of unification, but it amounts to the same thing.

The Minister for Mines: One Parliament for the whole of Australia?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One Parliament to control Australia, having powers of legislation over matters which are now dealt with by the State, as is the case with the Union of South Africa.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And delegate powers to provincial councils.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: As the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) has indicated, powers would be given to the provincial Governments throughout Australia.

The Minister for Mines: That is only an opinion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know there is a difference of opinion on this question. The Labour Party have stated clearly what they want. The Country Party have said that they want smaller States. The Nationalist Party, when they were in existence, said they wanted a convention. I have it from a Nationalist leader, who is one of the highest authorities, that that convention meant that they wanted unification. We have the Commonwealth Government aiming at increased power which will give them control over all the State Governments or provincial councils. While the leaders of the State rights party are opposed to the granting of those additional powers to the Federal Government, they overlook the fact that, under the Federal Constitution, the people as a whole have the ultimate power. That being so, it behoves those who wish to preserve the States to see that the State electors shall have equal powers with the Commonwealth electors. That is not provided in the Bill. Our position in Western Australia is different from that in the other States. Whenever by referendum the Federal Government have applied to the people of Western Australia for increased powers, those powers have been granted by a large majority. How are those who wish to maintain the States to combat the action of the Eastern States? In my opinion the very best way is to bring the people of Western Australia to realise that as State electors they have equal representation with the Commonwealth electors.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: But they have not that equal representation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, and that is why the State is losing ground. When a State elector in Western Australia has not equal representation with a State elector in any other Australian State, it is only natural that he should feel more kindly disposed towards the Federal Parliament, where he has equal representation with all other Australian electors, and lose interest in the State Parliament where his representation is not adequate. Of late every change in electoral qualification has told against the State elector of Western Australia and, in consequence, the general advocacy for handing over the affairs of State to the Federal Parliament is increasing in intensity. It is true that another place is almost solidly opposed to any extension of its franchise. The Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said we must give equal representation to all sections of the people. But he went on to say that we could not give equal representation as between electorates. In the Bill no attempt has been made to give equal representation as between the electorates. Not even distance from the capital is taken into consideration. The Bill is one of the most ridiculous, even atrocious, measures ever put before the Parliament of Western Australia. In 1911 we heard a lot about gerrymandering. In this Bill the Government have tried to escape that charge by putting the whole thing in the hands of the commissioners. In the Bill of 1913 we gave the commissioners a free hand.

The Premier. No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Well, almost a free hand. We gave them full power to fix the figures in 47 electorates, with a certain percentage under and over the quota.

The Minister for Mines: Why the under and over?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because it was thought the number in each electorate should be influenced by the distance from the seat of Government.

The Minister for Mines: The same thing applies here.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it does not. The Bill of 1913 provided that not only the means of communication, but also the distance from the capital, should be taken into consideration. In this Bill that is not provided at all. Distance is not considered; only community of interest is to be taken into account.

The Minister for Mines: In this Bill it is fixed; that is the difference.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is fixed in such a manner that certain electorates almost on the steps of Parliament House will have three times as much representation as will other electorates. The Premier, analysing the figures, pointed out that the State rolls showed a certain number of electors, who would be distributed over the various electorates. He said that in the metropolitan area there were 84,872 electors and that with the area divided into 14 electorates each electorate would have 6,062 electors. But while the State rolls show 84,872 electors in the

metropolitan area, the Federal rolls, which are of more recent date, which by reason of superior machinery are kept up to a standard that the State cannot hope to attain, which moreover are continuously revised by officials of the Postal and of the Electoral Departments, the Federal rolls show 85,720 electors in the metropolitan area. This estimate would increase the quota of each of the 14 electorates from 6,062 to 6,125. That would not be so bad; but, according to the Premier's figures, we have on the State rolls 178,010 electors, and when we consult the Commonwealth rolls we find that they show only 169,601 electors as the total in December of last year. Taking the Commonwealth rolls, there are in the metropolitan area 85,720 electors, which leaves only 83,881 electors for the remainder of the State.

The Minister for Mines: How do you arrive at the figures for the metropolitan area in the Federal rolls?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member ought to know how to arrive at it.

The Minister for Mines: But the boundaries are not the same as those of the State electorates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am well aware of that, but I know also what areas have been put in and what have been struck out. One has only to examine the Swan and the Forrest electorates. I have done that. The 83,881 electors outside the metropolitan area will be represented in the new Parliament by 36 members.

The Premier: Which is fewer than to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A difference of two! The 85,870 electors of the metropolitan area will be represented by 14 members. The Bill, we are told, has been brought down with a view to rectifying errors and improving the position in an endeavour to give better representation in this Chamber. But it is provided that while the Swan electorate, from which a person can walk into Perth for breakfast, walk out again, walk back for dinner, walk out to the Swan again, walk into Perth, have tea, see the pictures and walk home to bed—an electorate which is almost on the steps of Parliament House, is to have 2,863 electors, while the adjoining electorate of Guildford is to have 6,125 electors.

The Colonial Secretary: But Swan has over 4,000.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am dealing with the Premier's figures, submitted when moving the second reading. The same discrepancy will be found as between Murray-Wellington and South Fremantle. Then we go to the agricultural areas along the Midland railway. After leaving Swan, we reach Northam. One can conveniently leave Northam after breakfast, come into Perth, spend the day here and go back to Northam to sleep. That electorate, also, is almost on the steps of Parliament House. Yet it is to have 2,863 electors, while every seat in the metropolitan area is to have 6,125 electors. We are told this is an improvement on the existing system of representation. This is said

to give an adequate representation of all sections of the community. The Bill is designed to give a more just Parliamentary representation than we have at present.

Mr. Latham: It will improve it, will it not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is a great disparity at the present time, but I prefer to leave the electorates as they are now rather than accept this Bill. Until some measure is brought down which will give fairer representation to the community as a whole, we should let the electorates stand as at present. My electorate will go out of existence entirely under this measure. I do not know the reason for that. My electors are satisfied with me, and I am entirely satisfied with them.

The Minister for Mines: How can it be possible that your electorate will go out of existence?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To provide the quota.

The Minister for Mines: It cannot go out of existence.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have given the question more study than has the Minister. The Premier says he believes in giving adequate representation to all sections of the community. In the mining area he proposes to have five seats with 1,874 electors in each district. Why the agricultural area should be kept as one area and the mining area should be dissected, I do not know, but that is the case. It is a recognised fact among mining men, not only here but also in London, that mining receives only secondary consideration at the hands of the present Government.

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is a fact.

The Minister for Works: It has not been possible to satisfy the mining industry at any time, and it never will be.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are places outback as difficult of access or more so than the North-West portion of the State, and yet the people living in those outback places are to be put in a worse position than the people in the North-West.

The Minister for Mines: You are arguing both ways now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it suits me to put it both ways, I shall do so. For the present I am dealing with the Bill; the Minister will have an opportunity later.

Mr. Heron: If he is arguing both ways the Minister ought to be able to understand it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have been told repeatedly that as regards the Federal Parliament, it makes no difference whether the votes are of equal value or not, because each State has an equal number of representatives—six—in the Senate, and therefore the Senate can protect the State. It is proposed that the northern portion of the State shall have four members, each representing 1,000 electors, though it is as easy to get there as to get to the mining area where the districts will have 1,874 members, or nearly double

the number prescribed for the north. Members overlook that the northern portion of the State is represented in the Legislative Council by three members and has only 533 electors for that Chamber, a big proportion of whom are residents of the city of Perth. Yet the northern portion of the State is to have no fewer than four members representing a little over 4,000 electors in this Chamber. Is that fair representation? Does that show anything even approaching equality as compared with other parts of the State? I said just now that the Premier proposed to dissect the goldfields area. Why? The goldfields central area, mentioned in the schedule as a separate area, is to have four seats of 3,413 electors each. The people 400 miles distant are not to receive the same consideration as will be meted out to electors 20 miles away.

The Premier: You proposed to give the whole of the goldfields six seats, and we propose seven.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Things have changed since the Labour Government introduced their Bill in 1913. The goldfields central area will be required to have 3,413 electors to each seat, while the agricultural quota is to be 2,863. I do not think the Premier was quite fair in his remarks in moving the second reading of the Bill. He provided for only 49 members. If members refer to the Premier's speech in "Hansard" No. 18, they will find that he allowed for only 49 members.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The intention is to have for the agricultural area, not 22 seats with a quota of 2,295 electors, but 23 seats with a quota of 2,865 electors. If the Premier refers to his notes, he will find that what I say is correct.

The Premier: I have my notes here, and what you say is not correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the goldfields central area and the mining area were amalgamated so that the mining districts formed one area, just as the agricultural districts form one area, there would be in each district approximately 2,560 electors. I want members to recollect how far distant these places are situated from the seat of Government. We have the Murchison joining on to the Gascoyne. We have Kanowna running east along the Trans-Australian railway to the border and extending as far south as Esperance. We have Yilgarn, another large area, which extends to the coast at Ravenshorpe. These are all large areas, and yet they are to be treated differently from other portions of the State. This is the adequate representation which the Premier has sought to justify. Compare it with the pastoral districts, having an average of 1,064 electors to each district, and the agricultural districts having an average of 2,863 electors to each district, and we must conclude that there has been only one idea in the Premier's mind, namely, to ensure that where there is popu-

lation of any magnitude at all, they shall not be given that just representation which is conceded to the more scattered districts. The goldfields area is situated at a considerable distance from the seat of Government. Some of the mining districts are still further out and are scattered over a very large area, while the agricultural area is more compact.

Mr. Latham: It is not too compact.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is fairly compact in comparison with the goldfields and mining areas. This being so, I would like to know on what grounds the Premier or any other member can justify a Bill such as this. Would the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) contend that there should be over 6,000 electors for the Perth seat, while other districts touching it require a smaller number? I do not mind so much the scattered districts. I believe in the people ruling. All government should be controlled by the people as a whole, and one cannot object very much to the districts far distant from Perth requiring fewer electors than Perth itself. But is there any justification for seats surrounding the metropolitan area requiring only one elector to nearly three electors required in the city? Could any member go before his constituents and tell them that they had a value of only one-half to one-third of that of the people living at Kelmseott?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, he could say they had three times the value in their member.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They would not take that argument seriously.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Members are too modest to claim that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I put members on an equality; I do not regard one member as having greater qualifications than another. Any member who made such a statement to his electors would be offering them a great insult. It would be equivalent to saying that the man in the metropolitan area had not the brains to entitle him to the same qualification as the man living a little outside the city. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) said he thought the State rolls were more accurate than the Federal rolls.

Mr. Underwood: That is my experience.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My experience has been the reverse, unless a member personally does the canvass, and then a very good roll is obtained. To ascertain the reasons for the large increase in the number of electors on the State rolls, it is necessary to scrutinise the figures relating to the movement of population. It may be conceded that a number of persons have become of age and have claimed a vote on that ground, but it is impossible to check the figures in that respect. On the 30th June, 1921, the rolls showed an enrolment of 173,964 electors. On the 30th September, 1922, the number was 178,010, an increase of 4,054. Since that date the population has increased by only 2,082.

Mr. Underwood: You are missing 4,000 representing natural increase.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am making a mistake. The arrivals over departures has increased by 2,082, while the increase of population from the 30th June, 1921, to the 30th September, 1922, has been 9,267. The rolls showed an increase of 4,054, but the excess of births over deaths was 6,032. Among the arrivals in the State were 605 children under 12 years of age. The number between 12 and 21 has not been published, but it must have been considerable. Members will therefore realise that on the statistics published, there has not been an increase of population to warrant the increased number of enrolments. This goes to show that there must be a large number of duplications, and to my mind there is conclusive proof that the Federal rolls are more accurate than the State rolls.

The Minister for Works: A number of electors may have shifted to other districts and failed to get transfers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then their names would appear on two rolls.

The Minister for Works: I think a lot of them do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then their names should have been transferred. The Premier criticised the Bill that was introduced in 1913.

The Premier: No, I only mentioned it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was a far more just, fair and equitable Bill than this one.

The Premier: In what way?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill introduced by the Labour Government was based on the Queensland Act, which allows for Commissioners taking into consideration the differentiations between districts. Under that Act they can go one-fifth above or one-fifth below the quota. In New South Wales there is a margin of 600 to work on whether above or below. With the exception of Queensland and New South Wales there are, so far as I know, no Commissioners to set out the electoral districts. It is the desire of the people of this State that in the redistribution of seats each and every district should be treated fairly, and that there should be an equitable redistribution so far as the representation of each electorate is concerned. This Bill merely carries on much the same conditions as exist to-day. It is true that a few extra voters are given in some districts, and this applies more particularly to the metropolitan area. I hope in Committee members will scrutinise the Bill very carefully. No matter what Ministers may have told their supporters, it is clear that every Government must have the people behind them in order to control the affairs of State. If the Government desire that we should continue to hold our sovereign rights, they must give the people greater scope in electing their representatives to the State Parliament. If there is one thing more than another that will make for unification it is this Bill. It will also tend to increase the control of the Federal Parliament over the State. I believe the people will view it in that light. If the Federal Government

introduce legislation during the ensuing Parliament—I believe they will, for all parties desire to alter the present condition of affairs—this Bill, if it becomes law, will have a greater effect than anything I know of in inducing the people to vote against the State Government. I trust the Premier will even yet see his way to give greater representation to the metropolitan people. The country districts are not anxious for an increase. There are already only 3,100 electors in each agricultural district, but it is proposed by this Bill to give them two additional seats. The mining area should, on the figures, receive an additional seat, but the North-West should be cut down by one, because, in addition to its representation in this Chamber, it has full representation in another place. This Bill makes only for inequality in the representation of the people in this Chamber. It is purely a party Bill, and it is therefore idle to express the hope that it will be defeated. It has already been decided outside Parliament that it shall go through. The Premier was not definite on the point, but practically told us it was a party measure. In other words, the Government look to their supporters to vote for the second reading. During the last Parliament the then member for Canning (Mr. R. T. Robinson) introduced an Electoral Bill. He supplied us with the latest figures, endorsed by the Chief Electoral Officer, to enable members to form an opinion upon it. The Bill did not give satisfaction to a certain section of the community. The complaint against it was so loud that the then Attorney General placed a number of amendments on the Notice Paper, making it almost a new Bill. These did not give satisfaction either. They reduced the representation in the metropolitan area, but did not give satisfaction to those who were controlling the Government, as they are doing to-day. The Bill was subsequently struck off the Notice Paper. We are told that this Bill, however, has the unanimous support of those sitting behind the Government.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those who were so dissatisfied two or three years ago, because the representation then provided did not suit them, are now willing to give their votes in favour of this Bill.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is said that the member for Claremont is wavering.

Mr. J. Thomson: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a Bill designed to keep the Labour Party out of office.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think it will have that effect.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Nothing can do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Putting party questions aside, I say this is neither a fair nor a just Bill, and it should not be passed by this Chamber.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 20 |

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Munroe |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Hughes | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Luty | Mr. O'Loughlen |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Mrs. Cowan | Mr. Mann |
| Mr. Davies | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. Piesse |
| Mr. George | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | Mr. Mullany |

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [3.28]: If I thought that any argument or reasoning would have any effect upon members opposite I would be more inclined to devote some attention to the discussion on the second reading of this Bill. I know, however, that certain caucus meetings have been held, and that no matter what opinion members opposite may hold, those members have been gagged. They are under censorship, and are not allowed to express their individual thoughts in this Parliament. The screw has been put upon them by members of the Government, and it appears to me that any appeal to their reason or fairmindedness will be entirely useless. We are advised that the caucus met behind closed doors, that the meetings were held in secret. The people who elected members sitting opposite know nothing of what happened. They are not permitted to learn the views of their representatives, and no matter how strongly opposed certain of those representatives may be to the contents of the Bill, the majority of those sitting opposite have agreed to support it. They met in secret conclave, while the passage ways and corridors leading to the Premier's office were guarded so that no one might enter even through the keyhole. Everything was done behind the backs of the electors, and every dark and devious method, which the Labour Party were so often accused of adopting, was followed in this case, and taken to the bosom of the Government and their support-

ers. Members have been bound and gagged after a fashion that the Labour Party, in its most powerful days, never dreamt of.

Mr. Richardson: I never heard of that.

Mr. McCALLUM: I do hope the hon. member is free to listen to reason. If I cannot appeal to him, I hope to appeal to his electors. Any member of a metropolitan constituency who votes for this Bill will find that his conduct will be published in every highway and byway of his electorate. Off the top of the soap box the iniquities of this Bill will have been preached by the time the next election comes round.

Mr. Richardson: Surely you do not think that frightens any metropolitan member?

Mr. McCALLUM: My opinion is that voting for this Bill will mean the political end of any metropolitan member.

The Premier: The metropolitan area will get two more members under this Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: At the last redistribution of seats the metropolitan area was denied four seats to which it was entitled, and meantime the population of the metropolitan area has increased by 30,000. It has increased by that number since the last gerrymandering redistribution took place under the Premiership of the late Mr. Frank Wilson, I think in 1911.

The Premier: That redistribution put the Labour Party in. Surely you have nothing to say against it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The redistribution now proposed will put the Labour Party in, too.

Mr. McCALLUM: Observe the point of view adopted by the Premier—whom will it put in power; not is it just or right?

The Premier: But you said there had been gerrymandering.

Mr. McCALLUM: The rights of the people do not matter to the Premier. All the Premier has to put before the House is, whom will the redistribution put into power? Let the Premier mark my words, when the good judgment of the people is awakened, when their sense of right and justice is appealed to, the same results will ensue upon this measure, if it becomes law, as ensued upon the gerrymandering measure of 1911. The people will not support a Bill which endeavours to hand over for all time the control of the government of the country to one particular industry, depriving the manhood and the womanhood of the country of the right to rule themselves.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is the sole object of the Bill.

The Premier: Not at all.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier's interjection gave away the position. He asked, whom did the 1911 Bill put into power? That interjection shows the spectacles through which the Premier views such measures as this. We knew what was behind the 1911 Bill, and we stumped the country and stirred up a healthy public sentiment which would not endorse what had been decided by a section

of the then Parliament in secret caucus. We shall do the same this time.

The Premier: Of course you will.

Mr. McCALLUM: Members who represent the people, and not merely broad acres, know what will happen after the vote has been taken. The only two speeches which have been delivered since the second reading of the Bill was moved have come from this side of the House. Not a member supporting the Government attempts to justify the Bill.

Mr. Johnston: That will be remedied.

Mr. McCALLUM: The vote would have been taken just now had not this side of the House moved. The Speaker was just about to put the question. I am the third member on this side of the House to speak on the Bill. No attempt has been made by a Government supporter to argue in favour of the Bill. Members opposite have been gagged. They were summoned to the Premier's office and told that the fate of the Government depended on this Bill. The screw has been put on members opposite, and the whip has been cracked well over them. The Government have told them what is behind the Bill.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. McCALLUM: After meeting the Premier, members met Mr. Boss Monger in a little back room in St. George's-terrace.

Mr. Latham: Why don't you talk some facts?

Mr. McCALLUM: Let us listen to our friend here, who has just been on the carpet and told that if he attempts to support a friend he will be expelled.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member had better keep to the Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: But I must answer interjections, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Interjections are disorderly.

Mr. McCALLUM: There are members who have actually been threatened. That is why they dare not oppose what has been decided in secret caucus. They sit silent lest they be summoned before the junta of head hunters. The New Guinea head hunters seem to have deserted Beaufort-street and gone to St. George's-terrace. They have expelled from their association the biggest wheatgrower in the State, and they are carpeting their Deputy Leader.

Mr. Latham: That is not true.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow discussion of that kind.

Mr. McCALLUM: Can we ascertain why no Government supporter will rise to speak in favour of the Bill?

The Premier: Sit down and give the Government supporters a chance.

Mr. McCALLUM: I will sit down quite soon enough; I am not at all tired yet. We were sitting here quietly, waiting for someone to justify the Bill; but no one would attempt to put up an argument as to why the measure should become law. We now want to know from members opposite why this Bill should be enacted. I wish to make my own position

perfectly clear. I maintain that the guiding factor in the formation of a Parliament is that the manhood and the womanhood of the country should elect the Parliament and consequently the Government. I stand for adult franchise and for one vote one value. In the old days we fought for that principle, and abolished plural voting. When the opponents of adult franchise found their case hopeless, they devised a new system. They said, "Although each man and each woman shall have only one vote, we will make the vote of one man or one woman in certain districts equal to three or four times the value of the vote of one man or one woman in other districts." Thus plural voting was, in effect, reintroduced. No argument can be adduced in support of such a position. The present Bill merely represents a scheme devised for the purpose of retaining the control of the government of the country by one interest, thus refusing to allow the people themselves to be the controlling factor in the creation of a Parliament and a Government. The principle of this measure not only works injustice to the people as a whole, but in certain districts it will operate so disadvantageously to the electors that I can hardly think the Premier has examined the situation. What reason can he give for allotting to certain districts smaller representation than they now have, notwithstanding the fact that since the last redistribution was made their population has increased? In 1903 the Fremantle district had 9.5 per cent. of the population of the State, and the district then had five seats out of 50 in this Chamber. In 1923 the Fremantle district has 9 per cent. of the population of Western Australia, but under this Bill it is to have only two seats here.

The Premier: How do you make that out?

Mr. McCALLUM: On the figures presented. What justification is there for creating such a position? Why is Fremantle's representation to be decreased by three when it has practically the same proportion of population as it had at the time of the last redistribution?

The Premier: It will have three members under this Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM: It cannot get three members under this Bill. To get three seats requires 18,000 electors.

The Premier: How many electors has the Fremantle district?

Mr. McCALLUM: Between 15,000 and 16,000.

Mr. J. Thomson: There will be an increase at Cottesloe.

Mr. McCALLUM: Cottesloe will have a new member under the Bill. There will be a new seat between Fremantle and Perth, but according to the figures there should be at least three new seats in that area. In fact, there should be not less than four new seats in the Fremantle district. That district in 1905 had 10,000 electors, still 9 per cent. of the total population; but its representation was reduced to four members. In 1911 the

Fremantle district had 11,000 electors, representing 7.5 per cent. of the population of the State; but its representation was then reduced to three members. And now, in 1923, the district has 16,000 electors, representing about 9 per cent. of all the electors in the State, and that number of electors will give it only a little over two seats, to be accurate two and a half seats. The representation of the district is to be reduced from five members to two, while its proportion of total population has actually remained about the same. What argument could be adduced in favour of that? Can it be said that the representation of the metropolitan area, if the Fremantle electorates can be designated as such, has been harmful to the development of the back country? Is it suggested that those elected to represent metropolitan constituencies have not assisted in the development of Western Australia while they have controlled the Government? The position regarding the present Government disproves the last-mentioned contention. It is stated that the metropolitan area is over-represented in this Chamber and yet that portion of the State cannot secure a single Minister in the present Cabinet.

Mr. Hughes: And the city has to pay the penalty!

Mr. J. Thomson: The Minister for Works has a good knowledge of metropolitan requirements.

Mr. Johnston: The Colonial Secretary has a great knowledge of metropolitan affairs.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But his seat is not classed as a metropolitan one.

Mr. McCALLUM: With a hop, step and a jump from the terminus of the Victoria Park tramway line, one can enter the Swan electorate. Yet that constituency requires to have a thousand electors less than the Kalgoorlie electorate—

Mr. Heron: Which is 400 miles away from the city.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Perhaps the member for Claremont will explain that phase when he speaks.

Mr. McCALLUM: Is that equity or justice? The Swan electorate adjoins the South Fremantle electorate at one end. In my constituency some portions are further away from the Perth Town Hall than are portions of the Swan electorate, yet the Swan constituency is classed as a country seat and South Fremantle as a metropolitan seat.

Mr. Piesse: What is the area of the South Fremantle constituency.

Mr. McCALLUM: It covers a greater area than the Swan electorate.

Member: What is the difference then?

Mr. McCALLUM: I presume the difference is that South Fremantle is represented by a Labour member.

Mr. Latham: But there are different interests in the Fremantle and Swan electorates.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is as much agricultural produce grown in my electorate as

there is in the Swan electorate. I think that will be found to be correct.

Mr. Latham: I admit that your electorate is improving.

Mr. McCALLUM: The South Fremantle electorate has a great many more votes than the Swan electorate, for it comes close to the port and touches the more settled areas.

Mr. Latham: It has not more votes!

Mr. McCALLUM: Decidedly it has. Under the Bill, I will require to have more than twice the number.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Nearly three times.

Mr. McCALLUM: Can any reason be advanced why the Swan electorate, which comes practically to the terminus of the Victoria Park tramway, should have a thousand votes less to secure its Parliamentary representation than a goldfields electorate? What argument is there to support that position? I appeal to the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) to tell the House, seeing that he is a metropolitan representative, what argument was advanced in caucus to support such a proposal. Can he tell the people of Western Australia what reason was advanced to secure his support for this atrocious proposal? At the present time the Ministerial benches are empty, for caucus has decided the matter; the Premier has gone to sleep and no one takes the slightest interest in the Bill. The decision was arrived at behind closed doors, without the citizens being consulted at all. Hon. members talk about responsible government! Where are those big head lines we used to see in the "West Australian" and the leading Press of the State generally when the Labour Government were in power? When any decision was arrived at by caucus, an outcry went up that the decision had been arrived at without the people knowing the opinions of their representatives. Had the Labour Government attempted anything in the nature of the proposals contained in the Bill, there would have been an outcry from one end of the State to the other. I am open to conviction, and I am most anxious to know what arguments were put forward to members on the Government side of the House to secure their support. Why should there be so much difference between the several electorates? Why has one section of the State received so much advantage and increased representation in the control of the affairs of State, compared with those who are situated far away from the capital? Is it that the latter are engaged in another industry or is it that the electors there are inclined to vote for a different brand of politics? The people of the goldfields usually vote in support of members of the Opposition, and their voting strength is to be greatly reduced. In the electorates on the Eastern goldfields, they are required to have approximately a thousand more to secure their representation than is necessary in the agricultural districts. Can any reason be advanced why such electorates as Swan, Bunbury, and Albany should be more favourably treated than the goldfields areas, seeing that the means of communication and distance from the city are just as

great in the case of the goldfields constituencies? Are Northam, Albany, and Bunbury any more scattered than Boulder or Brownhill? What is the reason that the former electorates have been given such favourable consideration? Have those districts done more towards building up the prosperity of Western Australia? Has any one of those districts done as much as the Eastern goldfields districts towards lifting the State out of the rut? If it had not been for the gold discoveries, we would still be living as in the good old days when there was only a handful of citizens in Western Australia who took in each other's washing and did very little else. Because the goldfields made Western Australia, this is the treatment meted out to them!

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. J. Thomson: But this is nearly the Labour Party's Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no relationship between the two measures. For goodness sake do not make a statement like that!

Mr. J. Thomson: I said it was "nearly" your Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Not 25 per cent. of it!

Mr. McCALLUM: Is that the sort of stuff they gave Government members in caucus? Is that what Ministers caught them with?

Mr. J. Thomson: I do not attend caucus.

Mr. McCALLUM: If that was the sort of statement made in caucus, I can understand the attitude of Government members. I do not think, however, that they should be bound by any decision arrived at in ignorance. If it was said that this was the Labour Party's Bill, that statement was not correct.

Mr. J. Thomson: But it was nearly your Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't make that statement!

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Claremont will have an opportunity to speak later on.

Mr. McCALLUM: In the Bill of 1913 it was provided that the North West, which had four seats, should have three.

Hon. P. Collier: The title of this Bill is the same as ours and that is all.

Mr. McCALLUM: Our Bill reduced the representation of the North-West by one member, and it set out that the rest of the State should be divided into 47 seats. The Commissioners were to have a margin of one-fifth either way in dividing up the rest of the State. There was to be no division between the outer and inner goldfields areas nor yet between the agricultural and metropolitan areas. The commissioners were instructed to take into consideration distance from the seat of government, community of interest and the divergent interests to be represented. The present Bill departs from those proposals. It distinctly directs the commissioners that there must be three groups and leaves no choice to the commissioners. The Bill provides for groups comprising the outer and inner goldfields and the agricul-

tural and metropolitan areas. The Bill fixes those areas and leaves it to the commissioners to divide them up. A percentage is provided as between the different areas, and is laid down definitely. In some cases the difference in the percentage is 3 to 1. Where is it that this Bill compares with that introduced by the Labour Government? There is no comparison. The Bill does not advocate the principles laid down in the Labour Party's measure and it does not approach the ideals of that measure. Under the Bill 4,000 electors in the North-West will elect four representatives to this House and three to the Legislative Council. The great bulk of those electing the three members of the Upper Chamber reside in the metropolitan area and not in the North-West at all. Is that responsible Government? Is that carrying out the proposal that Parliament shall be elected by the people and that the Government of the country shall be a reflex of the opinion of the people as a whole? On the contrary, it is merely saying that Parliament is to be the reflex of the opinion of certain vested interests. The North-West provinces are controlled from the metropolitan area and not from the North-West. When it is stated that we must give people in the remote parts of the State greater representation because of that fact—

Mr. Johnston: That is a very important matter.

Mr. McCALLUM: Why should it not apply to people living at a distance from the city, no matter what industry they may be engaged in? The man living at Lake Way, at Leonora, in the Upper Murchison or North Coolgardie goldfields, is to have less representation than the man living at Kalamunda, Gosnells or Bunbury.

Mr. Johnston: Not at Lake Way.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is correct. The man living there would be in the outer goldfields, but the man living in the Eastern goldfields has a voting value of about half that possessed by a man residing at Gosnells. The whole scheme is devised to deprive the people of this State from having their opinions fully expressed in this Chamber. It is a Bill deliberately conceived to deprive the people of the power to control Parliament, and it hands over that control to one industry, the representatives of which are to form the Government. It is worse than any system of plural voting in force, that I am aware of. I do not know of any other part of the world where one man's vote has eight or nine times the value of that possessed by a voter in another part. There are certain parts of the State where the value of a vote is as much as 10 times that of the value of votes cast by people residing in other parts. If this is not more pernicious than even plural voting, I fail to grasp the underlying principles of the Bill. I support the view of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). If the great bulk of the people of the State find they are unable to make their appeals heard in this Parliament, that their

representation is to be watered in this way, there is only one alternative for them: The Commonwealth Parliament, with all its faults, is a democratic institution, and the people can go there and make their opinions felt, for they have there equality of voting. I fail to understand why the electoral principle of the Federal House is not acceptable in respect of this House. I have never heard the claim that either Fremantle or Perth has been more appreciably represented in the Commonwealth Parliament than have the electorates of Swan, Dampier or Kalgoorlie, although they have just about the same number of voters. The Commonwealth law lays it down that the commissioners have a range of one-fifth either way, and are to take into consideration community of interests. The commissioners have followed those lines as far as possible.

Mr. Johnston: That is why we have a high tariff—the influence of the cities.

Mr. McCALLUM: Why all the outcry about the high tariff? No party who appealed to the people of Australia on a free trade issue would ever see political life. The people of Australia will not tolerate free trade. Where are all the old time free traders? William Morris Hughes stumped the country in favour of free trade. He was George Reid's man Friday when Reid was the leader of the free trade movement.

Hon. P. Collier: The Country Party went to their electors in December on free trade, and came back with 14 members out of 75.

Mr. McCALLUM: The people will not have free trade. Quite right, too. It is time we began to do our own thinking instead of being led by such men as Hughes and Reid. No man in Commonwealth politics would dare to advocate free trade to-day. All the old free trade leaders have gone out of politics or, deserting their principles, have become protectionist leaders. In the early Federal campaigns Senator Pearce preached free trade; now he is a member of the Government who imposed almost a prohibitive tariff. All have now deserted the low tariff theory. Because the Commonwealth Parliament is now composed of men representing the manhood of the country, instead of any particular interests, is why we have a high tariff. Under the Commonwealth Constitution, Kalgoorlie and Swan are represented in the House of Representatives just as effectively as are Fremantle and Perth. Nobody has raised a voice against it.

Mr. Mann: Are you in favour of it?

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, to the utmost extreme do I stand for one vote one value. There is no other foundation on which a Parliament can be built. Because a man is in a certain industry or lives in a certain locality, is he any better fitted to elect members of Parliament than is anybody else?

Mr. Mann: Then you would have only one member for the North-West.

Mr. McCALLUM: I would have Parliament elected on proportional representation, with the electorates grouped. Then, instead

of parochial members representing little local interests, roads and bridges, they would be free from those narrow influences and able to use their better judgment. The only foundation for any Parliament is to have there a true reflex of the people's views.

Mr. Latham: The theory might be all right if the people would cast their votes intelligently.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is not a great compliment to the electors of York.

Mr. Latham: Take the result of the last local option poll. Was that a reflex of the people's opinion?

Mr. McCALLUM: I do not think it was.

Mr. Latham: It was achieved on the one man one vote principle.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, but it was a very small vote. I am not so much concerned about local option as about the constitution of Parliament.

Mr. Latham: There was only a small vote at the Federal election.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am not quarrelling about the result of any election. The people's view must prevail. If the people are so apathetic about their Parliament that they will not go to the poll, it rests with them; but when we have a Bill to deprive the people of the power of forming their Parliament, when we say, "We will hand it over to a select few and allow them to control Parliament, while the representation of others in Parliament will be small and ineffective so that they shall not have a voice in the governing of the country," it is a direct attack on the principle of government of the country by the people of the country. Once public opinion understands what is behind the Bill, that it means worse gerrymandering than did the notorious Wilson Bill, the people will be up in arms. The Wilson Bill manipulated areas, whereas this one arrives at the same result in a different way by tampering with vote values, by saying, "Because you live on the Eastern Goldfields and are likely to vote Labour, you shall have 1,000 more electors in each electorate than will those of Northam, Bunbury, Albany and Swan, all of which are likely to vote for our brand of politics." That is a worse method of gerrymandering than was that brought down by the late Hon. Frank Wilson. On that occasion the map was before hon. members to show exactly what had been done, whereas the methods employed in this Bill are more subtle, although just as pernicious. Can the Premier give any reason why the representation of Fremantle should be reduced one-half as against that of 1903.

The Premier: The position is quite safe.

Mr. McCALLUM: Can the Premier give any reason why South Fremantle should have twice as many electors as Swan? Is there any reason why South Fremantle should be called a metropolitan electorate, while Swan is classified as a country electorate? Why should the pioneers of Swan have superior representation to that of the pioneers of outback districts? Why should the electorate of the Pre-

mier be specially favoured as against that of the Leader of the Opposition? Is there any reason why Northam should have 1,000 fewer electors than Boulder?

The Premier: Northam will not have 1,000 fewer than Boulder.

Mr. McCALLUM: But it will. Why that favour?

The Premier: There is no favour.

Mr. McCALLUM: But it is clearly shown in your own figures.

The Premier: It is not so; there is not a difference of 1,000.

Mr. McCALLUM: Well, it is over 800. If there be any logic in the Premier's argument that city electorates should have a larger quota than agricultural electorates, Boulder should have more consideration than is shown to Northam. Why should the Eastern Goldfields electorates be handicapped as against Northam?

The Premier: They are not.

Mr. McCALLUM: But the Bill shows that they are. Surely these men have done as much for the State as has anyone else. They have suffered more and certainly, after working eight hours out of every 24 in the bowels of the earth, their prospects are less than those in possession of prosperous farms. All they have to look forward to is being killed by a fall of earth or to end their days in the sanatorium. After all they have done to rear families in that hot dry climate, their voice in this Parliament is not to be so effective as that of people more favourably situated in the milder climatic conditions of Northam, or the highly favourable climatic conditions of Albany and Bunbury.

The Premier: You are making a mistake.

Mr. McCALLUM: Those are the figures the Premier gave.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. McCALLUM: If it is because a man goes out and toils and develops the resources of the State that he is to receive special consideration, surely the men on the goldfields are entitled to equal, if not more consideration than those engaged in any other industry, because they have less to look forward to.

The Premier: They get far more than those in the agricultural areas.

Mr. McCALLUM: Only those in the outer mining areas. At present I am referring to those in the goldfields central area, and comparing the district represented by the Premier with the district represented by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Premier: You are wrong.

Mr. Munsie: My electorate covers a much bigger area than does Northam.

The Premier: Then we shall reduce the area.

Mr. McCALLUM: But the Premier wishes to reduce the representation.

The Premier: No, I do not.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier wishes to give Northam much more favourable consideration than Boulder or Kalgoorlie.

The Premier: I do not.

Mr. McCALLUM: When there has arisen, outside this Parliament, a question of laying down a policy for a very powerful section of the community and a conflict of opinion has occurred, I have always advocated constitutional reform, and that the people should look for redress of their grievances to the Parliament of the country. Am I now to accept this Bill whereby the great bulk of the industrial workers will be deprived of equitable representation, because other people own certain broad acres and are to have a vote equal in value to three or four times theirs? How can I face those men and urge them to look to the Parliament for redress when they can point to a measure that for all time will deprive them of a controlling influence, no matter what their numbers might be?

The Premier: That is nonsense.

Mr. McCALLUM: Then what other object is behind the Bill? If it is not to prevent a majority of the people of this State from having a majority of the representation in this House, what is the object?

The Premier: To give fair representation.

Mr. McCALLUM: I was going to raise the point that this Bill is out of order. When the Premier moved for permission to introduce it, he asked for permission to introduce a Bill to give more effective representation to the people in Parliament, whereas this Bill is to deprive the people of effective representation in Parliament. Why does the Premier lay down that one man's vote shall have a value six or eight times that of another man's vote?

The Premier: We do not.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Bill says so.

Mr. Hughes: It all depends whom the man votes for.

Mr. McCALLUM: Of course it depends on his political views. When one has passed through the fire as I have done and has urged men to look to Parliament for redress of their grievances, am I now to hamstring Parliament and say no matter what the bulk of the people desire, they cannot get it through Parliament because the electorates will be so rigged that their views will not be able to find forcible expression.

The Premier: The member for Canning represents twice as many people as you do.

Mr. McCALLUM: Quite so. What is wrong with that?

The Premier: The member for Canning could represent the district fairly, even if there were more electors in it.

Mr. McCALLUM: Then the Premier considers that, no matter how many electors there may be in our districts, if we are representing 6,000 or 8,000 electors—

The Premier: It is not fair, but the member could do justice to the increased number just as well as a man who represents a smaller number.

Mr. McCALLUM: But when it comes to a vote in this House the man representing 6,000 or 8,000 people has only one vote, whereas the member holding entirely opposite views and representing only 500 or 600 people also has

one vote. How can the former member get justice for those he represents?

Mr. Latham: We are trying to remedy that.

Mr. McCALLUM: Oh, you are!

Mr. Latham: This side of the House is trying to remedy it.

Mr. McCALLUM: By these means! The Bill proposes that for all time the vote of some men in this State shall have a value six or eight times greater than that of other men.

Mr. Latham: You are exaggerating.

Mr. McCALLUM: What about in the North-West, and those in the city?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Take Pilbara and Canning.

Mr. Johnston: We all recognise the special circumstances of the North-West, and always have done so.

Mr. McCALLUM: That has been overdone. There are 550 to 600 electors in some of the northern districts, and 8,000 electors are to be required in other districts.

Mr. Latham: Of course the prospects for the North are very bright!

Mr. McCALLUM: Are we asked to frame a Bill on prospects? If this Bill is to be framed on prospects, we should give the mining community more representation than the agricultural community.

Mr. Latham: We are giving them more.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Government propose to give them nine seats as against 22 for the agricultural community. It shows the hon. member has not read the Bill.

Mr. Latham: I am making a comparison of the voting strength.

Mr. McCALLUM: I am dealing with the groups.

Mr. Hughes: There will be 500 more electors in the mining districts than in the agricultural districts.

Mr. McCALLUM: We are told that there are prospects of a mining revival. I have just spent a few days on the Eastern Goldfields, and I find a very optimistic spirit prevails. Everyone seems confident that there is going to be a substantial revival in the gold mining history, and certainly everything seems to point that way. Yet in face of this and on the eve of a revival, the people are to have their representation reduced by five seats. Now the argument is advanced that, because the agricultural districts have prospects—

Mr. Latham: I never mentioned the agricultural districts. I was referring to the North-West.

Mr. McCALLUM: The North is getting four seats for fewer than 4,000 electors.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have three seats in the Upper House.

Mr. Latham: The number is 4,257 electors.

Mr. McCALLUM: The increase occurred in August or September.

Mr. Latham: I am taking the September returns.

Mr. McCALLUM: But the increase was caused by the men at the Wyndham Meat Works. That was not a permanent increase in settlement in the North.

Mr. Mann: You do not object to them voting do you?

Mr. McCALLUM: I know that they were not permitted to vote, because they had finished their work at Wyndham, and had been out of the district for more than a month.

Mr. Mann: That is the point.

Mr. Lutey: But they are still counted on the roll.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes, and that is why the figures show an increase. Four seats are proposed for fewer than 4,000 voters, and yet in the metropolitan area one member will represent 6,000 electors.

Mr. Latham: And they will be getting darned good representation then.

Mr. McCALLUM: They cannot get good representation until every man and woman from one end of the State to the other has a vote of equal value. That is the only basis on which any Parliament should be constituted. There was a time in history when one had to be of certain birth and carry a certain pedigree before he was permitted to have a say in the election of Parliament. Progress was made and then, if a person possessed certain rights, he was given certain powers in the election of Parliament. Then it came to a question of the amount of wealth possessed, and votes were granted in accordance with financial status. When the democratic spirit spread and it was shown that because a man happened to be born to wealth and riches, he did not necessarily possess the brains, knowledge and capacity to elect the men to govern the country, and that mere accident of birth was no index to capacity, people insisted that the only test—not infallible I admit—but the only possible test was to give a vote to the manhood and womanhood of the country. That is the accepted view of democratic countries throughout the world. We boasted of that when our Commonwealth Constitution was published to the world. We acclaimed it as the most democratic and advanced Constitution given to the people of any country. As to its distribution, there has not been a complaint that one portion of the State was represented better than another. Now we are asked to drift back to the middle ages, to the period preceeding plural voting. The system proposed under the Bill would be worse than plural voting. I would sooner see one man exercising eight or nine votes than agree to this pernicious system of permitting certain industries to govern the country and drawing a ring fence around certain areas and saying, "When you live in that group your representation shall be so and so, but when you cease being a miner and take up work at Dwarda or Narrogin, you shall have certain improved representation, but if you move into the metropolitan area your voice will be further weakened." One develops more brains immediately one leaves the goldfields for the agricultural area.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are the agricultural members an indication of that?

Mr. McCALLUM: No; but I am stating what the Bill declares. When one leaves

Northam for the city of Perth, one goes right back in point of political value. I for my part hold that miners who have sacrificed their lives to the industry are entitled to at least as much representation as agriculturists. However, members opposite are gagged and tied by caucus. I still hope that we shall find some members opposite telling King Monger's junta that they will not be dictated to any longer. At the caucus meeting passages and doors were guarded so that no eavesdropper might apply his ear to the keyhole.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I believe the members for Leederville and Perth were doorkeepers.

Mr. McCALLUM: No doubt they were thoroughly efficient. I trust that even at this late stage we can successfully appeal to members opposite to let the people enjoy something like equitable representation in Parliament. I hope this Parliament will not go out next year with the same odium upon it as the Parliament which terminated in 1911. When that Parliament dissolved, the people were convinced that it had done its utmost to deprive them of their Parliamentary representation. My hope is that we shall be able to go out to the people and tell them that, believing the rearrangement of boundaries to be necessary, we made it on an equitable basis, on the guiding principle that the manhood and the womanhood of the country must be the factors to determine the make-up of this Chamber.

Mr. Teesdale: Would you be satisfied if a North-West seat were cut out?

Mr. McCALLUM: No.

Mr. Teesdale: But you made that the chopping block of your argument.

Mr. McCALLUM: I cited the North-West because it is an extreme case. If the North-West is to have four seats, that is not the only argument, or the strongest argument, I have against the Bill. The worst comparison would be one between Northam and Boulder; or between my district and Swan. The Premier proclaims daily that there is no healthier or more prosperous life than the life on the land, and yet he says by this Bill that people adopting that life must receive special consideration as against those engaging in another industry which we are told is also essential to Western Australia. If a man happens to live a quarter of a century to delve into the bowels of the earth, he ends up either crippled or with his health ruined. Will some member opposite tell us what happened at the caucuses?

Mr. Latham: You do not tell us what happens at your caucus meetings.

Mr. McCALLUM: It will be time enough for the hon. member to complain when the caucus of this side begins to lay down rules for the government of the country and to bind its members on matters which have not been placed before the people. At no time is a caucus of this party permitted to tie down members with regard to matters outside the platform on which they appealed to the people. After matters have been discussed at

our caucus meeting, every man has the right to come outside and explain his position.

Mr. Teesdale: You have your members well in hand.

Mr. McCALLUM: Members opposite when sitting on this side of the House, used to rail for hours against caucus rule as something pernicious. One of the present Ministers when on these benches even suggested the introduction of a law to forbid caucus rule. But now we find members opposite meeting at the end of a dark passage, with guards parading up and down so that no stranger can approach. And a meeting of that kind proposes to decide how this country is to be ruled! Members opposite remain silent with regard to the Bill, leaving three speeches to be delivered one after the other by this side of the House. Members opposite are like dumb, driven cattle, obeying the whip, having no soul of their own, without an opinion of their own, simply doing as the Government Whip directs them to do. We expect no consideration from the Press in this matter. There will be no flaring headlines in the newspapers as to this caucus proposal, no such headlines as there would have been had a travesty of this description come from the caucus of this side. The Bill is a complete travesty of responsible government. The Bill declares that the people, no matter what their numbers, shall not have control of Parliament. It is time the people understood the situation. I trust that at all events those members opposite who represent metropolitan constituencies will not permit the injustice proposed by this Bill, but will demand equitable representation for their districts. Why should Claremont be required to have 6,000 electors as against Northam's 2,800? Was that made plain to hon. members opposite in caucus? How can the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) explain that position to his electors? I can see him on a Sunday morning at the yacht club telling his constituents that 6,000 of them are equivalent to 2,800 of the Premier's electors. He will have to explain to them that the people of Northam are of such broad intellect and profound knowledge that it takes 6,000 Claremont residents to equal 2,800 Northam residents. The hon. member's electors will take it as a deliberate insult, and as a reflection on their intelligence. I should be glad to visit the yacht club on the Sunday morning when the hon. members gives his explanation. Then I may learn something of the doings at that notorious caucus meeting. If the hon. member will let me know on what Sunday morning he proposes to make his explanation, I will come along. Or perhaps the hon. member contemplates making another "jump Jim Crow."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Claremont is not in the Bill.

Mr. McCALLUM. But his district is in the Bill, Sir, and his electors are vitally concerned. I do not wish the hon. member to lose his seat. Let him realise what is behind the measure, in case he should

be defeated by someone who appeals to the electors' sense of fair play, and points out to them that they should have equal voting strength with the electors of Northam and Banbury. Again, it may be pointed out to the electors of Claremont that there is no reason why 2½ of their votes should be required to balance one vote at Kalamunda.

The Colonial Secretary: That is not so.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is the position under the Bill.

Mr. J. Thomson: Do you believe in one man one vote?

Mr. McCALLUM: Most decidedly.

Mr. J. Thomson: So do I. Do you believe in wiping out this Parliament?

Mr. McCALLUM: No; but if this is the kind of law this Parliament will vote, then I am in favour of wiping it out.

Mr. Latham: You will have a metropolitan Parliament then—very nice!

Mr. McCALLUM: No Parliament elected under this Bill could be a Parliament of the people.

Mr. Johnston: It would be more like that than is the present Parliament.

Mr. McCALLUM: No, because the Bill is not removing the defects of the present Parliament.

The Colonial Secretary: Yes it is.

Mr. McCALLUM: In what way?

The Colonial Secretary: It will give fairer representation.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Bill deliberately deprives the people of representation, and hands it over to a select few, to one industry, to particular vested interests, while it gags democracy, and says to the industrial workers, "We are going to give three or four or even five or six of your votes as against one of ours." The whole effect of the Bill will be to undermine respect for this Parliament and to dispel the idea of this Parliament being made a channel through which the democratic spirit of the community can be given effect to. I am not going to agree to any Bill which will debar the people of Fremantle of their fair share of representation here. They are to be reduced 50 per cent., as against their representation of 1903, although their number is virtually the same now as it was then. I urge those with any sense of fair play and justice to consider the position of the men on the Golden Mile. Why should they be treated as the Bill proposes? Why should the vote on the goldfields be of less value than the vote in the agricultural areas? The gold mining industry has done wonders for Western Australia, and now this is the treatment to be meted out to the men in that industry! You once asked us, as leaders of those men, to go back to them and appeal to them to seek by constitutional means the redress of their grievance, to look to Parliament, and to disregard any method they themselves might devise; and, we having done all that, you now sing in their teeth a Bill like this, and say, "This is how we propose to constitute Parliament, and hamstring certain electors. After having persuaded you to come

to Parliament for redress of your grievances and for the expression of your views, this is what we propose to do with your representation in Parliament." It is a most outrageous proposal, cutting at the foundation of responsible Government. It gets us back to the times which gave rise to the democratic spirit. I hope that even now we may be able to get, at all events those representing thickly populated centres, to vote against the measure, or at least to demand from the Government some modification, some amendment, so that the new Parliament may be actually the reflex of the people's views. I hope the second reading will not be carried. Even if it means our sitting here till the time comes for the beginning of the next session, we on this side will devote ourselves to an endeavour to amend the Bill in keeping with the spirit of the times, and make it something like a democratic measure.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.52]: I object to the comparisons made between this Bill and the Bill passed in 1911, which caused so much comment at that time. There is no comparison between the two measures. On that occasion survey parties were sent out to survey the boundaries of certain electorates, excluding those electors antagonistic to the sitting member. A measure was brought down to suit the Government of the day and their supporters, which by its very unfairness had an entirely different effect. Nothing arouses party feeling more than a Bill for an amendment of electoral boundaries, but on this occasion the Bill has the merit that the boundaries are to be drawn up by an independent commission with a judge of the Supreme Court as chairman.

Mr. Chesson: With their hands tied behind their backs!

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Surveyor General and the Chief Electoral Officer are to be the other members of the commission. I am pleased to see that the Government have learned the lesson of 1911, and have adopted in this measure the very proposal that was first brought along by the Scaddan Government in 1913, namely, for the actual fixing of the boundaries to be performed by an independent board with a judge as chairman. It is true the Government are going to lay down certain lines of policy upon which that independent commission shall operate, but even then the lines of policy have to be approved by the present Parliament.

Mr. Chesson: What is to be the power of the commission? There is only the fixing of the boundaries.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is the most important part of it. I approach the matter with an absolutely open mind, not having attended the meeting referred to.

Mr. Wilson: Do you believe in quotas?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I will deal with that presently. First I wish to point out anomalies existing between the numbers of elec-

tors in the various electorates. Surely, when we look at these figures, everybody will admit the necessity for some immediate and drastic alteration, some fairer method of representation. That is what the Bill is for. We may be able to improve it, but I tell those opposite that in my opinion the Bill as printed is much fairer than is the existing position. To-day there are in the Menzies electorate 543 electors; in Leonora, 784; in Mt. Margaret, 729; in Cue, 748; and in Yilgarn 1,073.

Mr. Chesson: No provision is made to get outback electors on the roll.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Even if that is so, I am surprised that members representing such constituencies do not do as I do, namely, send out claims to local authorities, and ask them to see that the rolls are brought up to date.

Mr. Chesson: Many of my electors are 300 or 400 miles out.

Mr. JOHNSTON: At any rate, the total of those five goldfields electorates is only 3,876 electors. Just fancy those 3,876 electors having five members to represent them in this House, while Williams-Narrogin, with 3,755 electors, has but one member! In other words, the men who are opening up the country in my electorate have only one-fifth of the representation of those who are rendering a similar—for the sake of argument, let me say even greater—service to Western Australia in opening up goldfields districts. The disproportion is altogether too great.

Mr. Lambert: If your electorate had the same representation, you would have only 500 constituents.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Coming to the metropolitan area, we find that Canning, with one member, has 10,354 electors. We see there the absolute necessity for the Government to bring in this measure providing for a redistribution of seats on a fair and equitable basis. In regard to the North-West seats, for a good many years past that portion of the State has had four members. In my opinion that is quite right. Having a slight knowledge of the North-West—

Mr. Chesson: A very slight knowledge.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I admit that, gained on the occasion of one visit as far North as Wyndham. Having that knowledge, however, of an isolated portion of Western Australia, I consider it should at least have its present representation, and I shall not be a party to reducing it. Let us look at the Redistribution of Seats Bill which was brought down by the Labour Government in 1913, and which I think was in some respects a very fair measure, although it did not give that extra representation to those who were producing most of the country's wealth, that is afforded by the measure now before us. In that year the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) moved an amendment in Committee to provide for three members for that part of the State north of the tropics. That part of the State was not entitled to three members on a population basis. The amendment was carried on a division. The Opposition disagreed with the proposal as they desired to retain four

members. But the question of three members for that was carried to a division.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only three were provided for in the original Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes. Mr. Male and others who opposed the amendment said it was their desire that there should be four. I find on looking at the division which was taken, that I voted for it and that amongst others who also voted for it were Mr. Collier, Mr. Chesson, Mr. Angwin, and Mr. O'Loghen. I commend them for having done so. The action was quite consistent with their principles. Once you admit the principle of extra representation for a small number of people in an isolated portion of Western Australia, you must admit, too, the same principle being applied, to a lesser extent, to other outback parts of the State. At any rate that principle was admitted by the hon. members opposite whom I have named.

Mr. Chesson: That was a good while ago.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We admitted the principle then which I wish to see applied with variations throughout the whole of the outlying portions of the State—three members for the area north of the tropics. The principal of extra representation for the North-West was properly admitted by this House. I wish to see the same principle applied throughout Western Australia having regard to the distance of any locality from the capital city. I am of opinion that under this measure Perth will get three extra seats, when the rolls are brought up to date. I believe the rolls of the metropolitan area are in a bad state at the present time. To my mind the growing increase of the population in the metropolitan area is a regrettable position of affairs, and by this Bill we are not going to carry out the ambition of members of this House to check the drift of population to the city. The metropolitan area has always been well looked after. So many members necessarily have to spend a lot of time here; the great Press of Western Australia circulates from the metropolitan area and moulds opinion—perhaps to an unfortunate extent—right throughout the State. The metropolitan area has the advantage of getting its views published throughout the State. On the other hand, the outside parts of Western Australia find it very difficult, however sympathetic the Government in power may be, to get the same measure of consideration that is always conceded to the metropolitan area. On looking at the production of Western Australia we find that 86 per cent of the wealth of the State is accounted for by the primary producers.

Mr. Hughes: That is not correct. What about transport? Is not that part of production?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Certainly it is. We find that the agricultural production last year was valued at £6,926,532, the pastoral production at £3,886,199, dairy, poultry and bee farming £1,132,257, forestry and fisheries £1,937,153, mining £2,880,169, and manufacturing, which is mainly carried out in the city,

£3,698,923. Of this total production of £20,461,233, 86 per cent. of it is accounted for by the people in the pastoral, agricultural, mining, timber and allied industries. Yet the primary producers will not have representation in Parliament adequate to their proportion of the production.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why make a distinction between the producers and others; are the others not producing?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Not to the same extent.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are there any better citizens?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Their work is more valuable to the State. At any rate the man who is situated in a remote part of Western Australia should get additional representation. We have admitted that with regard to the North-West. The weak spot in this measure, as it seems to me, is the discrimination against the Goldfields Central Area—the electoral districts of Boulder, Brownhill, Ivanhoe, Hannans and Kalgoorlie. It is true that Kalgoorlie is a well laid out city, but so are Northam and Bunbury, and I am of opinion that the Government could quite fairly put the four goldfields electorates I have named on the same quota as the agricultural areas. There is the extra distance from the capital to the Kalgoorlie goldfields, but we would have against that in the agricultural districts the higher amount of production per head which the people in those districts are carrying out. In Committee I shall vote to put the central goldfields on the same quota as the agricultural districts and as one who has always believed in the principle that distance from capital is one of the main factors that should be considered, I think the Government may well accept that small amendment. I am of the opinion that outback places should have more representation than the city.

Mr. Lambert: What about the outer goldfields?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The position of the outer goldfields has been recognised in the Bill; the quota is only two-thirds of the quota in the agricultural areas, and that in spite of the fact that many of the people in the agricultural areas are living under the same arduous conditions which unfortunately prevail in the outer mining areas. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill entirely on its merits. As I said before, I was not present at any meeting of caucus or party with regard to the measure. I am glad that the distance from the city, which I look upon as an important factor, is recognised in the measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is, and it can be further recognised as far as Kalgoorlie and the central mining areas are concerned. I wish to see that brought about and I shall vote for it in Committee, but after all is said and done, Parliament next session will have the opportunity of considering the result of the Commission's report. This is only a machin-

ery measure. The result we shall get from it, with the amendment I have suggested, should be a great improvement on existing conditions. Regarding the Commission, we know that there will be nothing to complain of in so far as the personnel is concerned. The members of the Commission will do their duty on the principles laid down in the Bill, and when the redistribution measure comes before us we will probably get a better appreciation of it when we see the complete work of the Commission. I reserve to myself a free hand when dealing with that measure next session. In the meantime I am glad that the Bill before us has come along. It will be a considerable improvement, and where necessary and equitable, we must amend it in Committee, so as to ensure better representation being given to the people of the State.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 17 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 22 |

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Munro |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Hughes | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Loughlen |
| Mr. Lutey | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. Piesse |
| Mr. Carter | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. George | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Teeddale |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Mann | (Teller.) |
| Sir James Mitchell | |

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. HUGHES (East Perth) [5.20]: I congratulate the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) upon his courage in braving the displeasure of his leader, and explaining how it is he is prepared to support the Bill. He must have possessed some courage, because from what we have heard this afternoon it appears that definite and explicit instructions were issued to members not to exercise their own discretion, or do any thinking for themselves.

The Premier: I do not know what he did.

Mr. HUGHES: He spoke in support of the Bill, apparently in conflict with definite instructions that he was not to do so. No doubt members will find some difficulty in saying anything in favour of the Bill. The title is a misnomer. It should have been called "The Mitchell Government Insurance Bill," a Bill to insure the life of the present Government, irrespective of whether they have the support of the community or not. The member for Williams-Narrogin gave certain figures, and stated that 86 per cent. of the production came from the agricultural areas.

The Premier: No.

Mr. Johnston: The primary industries.

Mr. HUGHES: Does the hon. member believe that the only man concerned in the production of the State is the farmer, the primary producer? Is not the transport worker who controls the railways, the railway man who delivers to the farmer his requisites and carts his produce back to the city, entitled to a place in the scheme of affairs? Does he not make production possible? Is he not a part of the machinery of production?

The Premier: Of course he is. No one said otherwise.

Mr. HUGHES: Is it not of importance to the farmer that he should get his agricultural machinery? Is not the agricultural machinery worker at the State Implement Works an important link in production?

Mr. Harrison: A great many of the employees live out in the country districts.

Mr. HUGHES: Not at all.

Mr. Harrison: A number of them live in my electorate.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member does not consider that the man who manufactures agricultural machinery is a unit in production. Apparently he thinks that production lies only with the St. George's-terrace farmer.

Mr. Harrison: You spoke about transport workers.

Mr. HUGHES: I am referring to the man who owns the farm and employs labour to cultivate it. He is referred to as the primary producer. What about the vast army of industrial workers?

Mr. Harrison: Those industrial workers are many of them in the back country.

Mr. HUGHES: What nonsense! How many of the industrial workers live outside the metropolitan area?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: How many of the employees at the Midland works live outside the metropolitan area?

Mr. Johnston: Hundreds of them employed on railway transport live in the country.

Mr. HUGHES: There are not many hundreds who live outside the metropolitan area. The hon. member must know that the great bulk of these reside between Midland Junction and Fremantle.

Mr. Underwood: Rubbish!

Mr. HUGHES: Most of the employees of the Midland Junction workshops live between there and Fremantle.

Mr. Johnston: We know where they live.

Mr. HUGHES: Why does the hon. member say they live outside the metropolitan area?

Mr. Johnston: I said that many do.

Mr. Underwood: Of course they do. Some live at Collie.

Mr. HUGHES: How many of the 1,500 or so men engaged at the Midland Junction workshops live at Collie? They all live between Perth and Midland Junction. The largest branches of the railway unions are in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Chesson: Do the men who handle your goods for export live in the country?

Mr. Underwood: Some railway men live in Marble Bar.

The Premier: And some at Port Hedland.

Mr. HUGHES: The great bulk of industrial workers, who are just as important in the matter of production and play just as big a part as the St. George's-terrace farmer are concerned in the production of the 86 per cent. referred to, but are not included in the hon. member's figures.

The Minister for Mines: They are included. The St. George's-terrace farmer would come under the higher quota in the metropolitan area, and the others would come under the lower quota.

Capt. Carter: And it would favour you both ways.

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Williams-Narrogin stated that 86 per cent. of the production came from the primary producer and gave that as a reason why there should be additional representation for agricultural areas. He also said that was why the vote of the man outside the metropolitan area should be equal to the votes of six men living inside it. One man in Wyndham is to be equal to six voters in Perth, and one in the agricultural area equal to two voters in Perth. The man who sows the crop is to be equal to two who work in the implement works, although both are essential to production. It is a lame argument to say that 8 per cent. of the production comes from the primary producers living outside the metropolitan area. If we cannot get agricultural implements manufactured in Perth and elsewhere in the metropolitan area, there can be no agricultural progress. What is the use of making a statement like that of the hon. member? If it were possible to assess which part of the production actually belonged to the primary producer, and which belonged to the industrial worker of the metropolitan area who is engaged in manufacturing various farming requisites and transporting them, I would be found that at least two-thirds of the latter were resident within the metropolitan area.

Mr. Johnston: I do not think so.

Mr. HUGHES: We cannot, however, go into the figures. We have heard a lot about city influence and about the representation of the city. There are 84,000 electors in Perth, nearly half the population of the

State, and yet not one representative of those electors finds a place in Cabinet. The Government are dominated entirely by the agricultural districts. The city has never been antagonistic to the agricultural areas.

Mr. Underwood: Why do you not get someone to adopt you, as we have?

Mr. HUGHES: If the Government have adopted the hon. member they have my sympathy.

The Minister for Mines: They must have got him at night time.

Mr. HUGHES: I suppose he was left on the door step when members of the Government were asleep. The city cannot get anyone to adopt him in the way the North-West has. That part of the State has in turn been adopted by the Government. The city has no members like the member for Pilbara, and consequently he is not likely to be adopted by it. Owing to the unsympathetic administration of the city no money can be found for any works in Perth or suburbs. It must all be spent in the agricultural areas, notwithstanding that the bulk of the taxes are paid from the metropolitan area. When it comes to taxation there is no differentiation between the city worker and the agricultural worker. All are placed on the same footing. When it comes to a question of taxation, we do not have the man in the agricultural areas paying twice the rate that is asked of the man in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We pay more in the city because we have to pay land tax as well.

Mr. HUGHES: That is so. We are not relieved of half our taxation because we represent city workers. When it comes to a question of the franchise, however, we are asked to make two men in the city worth one man in the country areas.

Mr. Cunningham: In some cases it is six to one.

Mr. HUGHES: The result of this is that the metropolitan area can get nothing. It is astonishing to see the metropolitan members, with two exceptions, apart from members of the Labour Party, who are prepared to sit down and allow a Bill to be passed that will render it impossible for ever and a day for the metropolitan area to get adequate representation or satisfaction from the Government.

Mr. Johnston: All laws are amended from time to time.

Mr. HUGHES: Yes, and if only one can get the necessary majority, one can amend laws at any time. That is the real object of the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Country Party are running the Government now, so what difference does it make?

Mr. HUGHES: But they want to make their position more secure, because at the next election the present Government will be turned out of office. Anyone studying public opinion can see that that will happen. For that reason, they wish to gerrymander the electorates so that the Government can carry on representing 65,000 electors and legislate

in opposition to the wishes of 100,000 electors. With a minority of 35,000 electors, the Government wish to go ahead. It is because members see the writing on the wall that they wish to stave off the evil day. A member representing 246 electors is prepared to vote to reduce representation of the metropolitan area. It is an audacious proposal.

Mr. Teesdale: To what electorate are you referring?

Mr. HUGHES: The Roebourne electorate; it is evident that the cap fits.

Mr. Teesdale: Then it is a pity you have not brains to fit that head of yours. The electors total 568.

Mr. HUGHES: I am quoting from an official document issued by the Electoral Department on the 12th March, 1921. In the electoral district of Roebourne, which I understand has the pleasure of being represented by the hon. member, I find that Peter Daley secured 47 votes.

Mr. Teesdale: Leave Daley out of it. He is very sorry.

Mr. HUGHES: I believe there are many more. Then John Reed received 36 votes, and Frederick William Teesdale 246 votes.

Mr. Teesdale: Does that mean that the constituency has 246 electors?

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member represents 246 electors!

Mr. Teesdale: And they all vote straight, too.

Mr. HUGHES: That hon. member now comes to Parliament and supports a measure that means that 6,000 electors in this city will only be equal, from the standpoint of the franchise, to a much smaller number in the North-West.

Mr. Teesdale: Do not say that that number represents the total number of electors in the constituency.

Mr. HUGHES: The fact remains that the hon. member represents 246 electors.

Mr. Teesdale: I got a better percentage than you did. You only got 26 per cent.

Mr. HUGHES: I represent 2,000 electors, which is 10 times more than the hon. member's total, yet he is prepared to reduce the active voting strength of those 2,000 down to that of about 300. I will be pleased if the member for Roebourne has plucked up sufficient courage to oppose the Bill. If he does so, I will congratulate him in common with the member for Williams-Narrogin. It would appear that it does not matter where one lives, but how one will vote. That is the underlying principle of the Bill. Because we have evidence that the agricultural constituencies will return an anti-Labour Government, we have a Bill brought down which cannot do otherwise than place the Government in control for ever and a day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There will be no Government soon. The Federal Government will have the lot of us.

Mr. HUGHES: In the metropolitan area there are 85,000 electors. A great many of them are engaged in industrial work. If we are to give the North-West increased repre-

sentation because of the possibilities of development in that part of the State, we should have two members in East Perth to compensate for the industrial development that is taking place there. There is no indication of that, however, yet we have a member who represents 246 electors prepared to follow the Government blindly, without giving his opinions to the House.

The Premier: If you come over here, we will not ask you for your reasons at all.

Mr. HUGHES: If I went across to the Ministerial side of the House, the Premier would not only not ask me for my views, but he would forbid me to give them. That is what he has done.

The Premier: No, I have not.

Mr. HUGHES: That is why the Government members sit there in silence, although some of us represent 10 times as many voters as some of those who have been elected.

The Premier: Nonsense.

Mr. HUGHES: That is what the member for Roebourne said until I gave him the figures. As the result of this anti-city administration, the metropolitan area has suffered neglect. We cannot get any work done in the city. The deficit is being built up owing to the taxation we have to pay in an endeavour to square the railway finances. The bulk of the railway deficit is caused because we are carrying farming requisites at an unpayable rate. The city dwellers have to pay for this losing proposition in order that the farmers may make good. The city dwellers have to do that not only for the struggling farmers—no one could object to that—but also in the interests of the prosperous farmers as well. The income tax returns show that the average income of a farmer is double that of the wage earner in the city, and yet the city worker is obliged to pay taxation to make up the railway deficit in the interests of the agriculturists as a whole.

Mr. A. Thomson: You know that is not correct.

Mr. HUGHES: It is correct. The hon. member will find that it is so. If he looks at the reports, he will find that we are carrying requisites for the farmers over our railways at a tremendous loss annually, and those losses have to be made good.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is nonsense.

Mr. HUGHES: It is not nonsense. The trouble is that it is not only done in the interests of the struggling farmers, but in the interests of those who are on the high road to prosperity. The Premier told us the other night that there are many of those who have been assisted through the I.A.B. who have money in the bank, and whose assets are free. Notwithstanding that, the city dweller still has to pay taxation in order to enable farmers in that position to carry on.

Mr. Underwood: Moral, why live in the city! Why not live in the country?

Mr. HUGHES: It is not possible to get land when one wants it. I have one constituent who has been waiting for three months to get a block of land.

Mr. Teesdale: I suppose he wanted to get someone else's block?

Mr. HUGHES: This man could not get land, and yet we hear members on the Ministerial side of the House advising people to go into the country. The hon. member was not so much concerned last week with his desire to send people out of the city, when he voted for a useless industry in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Agriculture: What useless industry do you refer to?

Mr. HUGHES: The Perpetual Trustee Company.

The SPEAKER: Order! That company is not under discussion.

Mr. HUGHES: These gross injustices that are being done to the city are made possible only because the present Government are dominated by members of the Country Party. It is because of that fact that we have not a city member in the Cabinet. The city has always been sympathetic towards the agricultural areas, no matter what Government held reins of office, and everything has been done to improve the lot of the farmer. That is as it should be, but we are asked to assist not only the struggling farmer but the prosperous farmer as well, and that is not right. We are asked to do that only because the agricultural representatives hold a dominating influence over the Government. It is due to that fact that the present gerrymandering measure is before hon. members. The measure provides for 22 agricultural seats.

Mr. Johnston: That includes Collie and Forrest.

Mr. HUGHES: And also four seats in the North-West. With the 22 seats, they will represent something like 55,000 or 56,000 electors. All that has to be done to retain power is to snatch a couple of seats in some other part of the State. There are certain hide-bound constituencies that may be depended upon to return Tories and then the Government is secure for ever and a day.

The Minister for Mines: Why not make it 10 years beyond that period, and give us a chance?

Mr. HUGHES: If we did that, it would give the member for Roebourne an opportunity to get a couple more electors.

The Minister for Mines: What about Cue and Yilgarn?

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, run on the Yilgarn shift for a while. We have had enough of the North-West.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is more difficult to get to the Yilgarn electorate than it is to get to Roebourne.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: In Yilgarn 746 electors cast their votes as against 329 in Roebourne or nearly twice as many.

The Minister for Mines: How does that compare with East Perth?

Mr. HUGHES: There are over 2,000 in East Perth.

Mr. Teesdale: You got half of those only by accident.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The member for Roebourne is an accident politically.

Mr. Teesdale: A pretty good one.

Mr. HUGHES: In Yilgarn twice as many electors voted as in Roebourne, and yet the conditions of life are as arduous in parts of Yilgarn as in the North.

Mr. Teesdale: If you make a statement like that, you show you know nothing about it.

Mr. HUGHES: Has the hon. member ever been in Yilgarn?

Mr. Teesdale: Yes.

Mr. HUGHES: Roebourne is a land flowing with milk and honey in comparison.

Mr. Teesdale: If you went there for a few months, it would take your condition off.

Mr. HUGHES: That would be a service and not a disadvantage.

The Minister for Agriculture: A very hard seat to represent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Very changeable.

Mr. HUGHES: The need for a distribution of seats is long overdue. When we have 84,000 electors who carry on the useful and hard toil of the State, industrial workers who make everything else possible, represented by 12 members, and a few wealthy pastoralists in the North-West able to get four members for 4,000 voters, a portion of the State where the difficulties are so great that the industrial worker cannot get on the roll, there is no doubt that a redistribution is urgently needed.

Mr. J. Thomson: Up till the last general election the North was represented by nearly all Labour members.

Mr. HUGHES: That does not alter the fact. That is the point of view which appeals to members supporting the Government—because it would be of personal advantage we are asked to support the proposition. As the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) pointed out, because the Premier thought it would be in the interests of Labour is no reason why we should support it. What does it matter whether people vote Labour or anything else. The object of a redistribution should be to give proper representation. The Labour Government, in their Bill, proposed to reduce the number of seats by one, notwithstanding that the representatives of the North at that time belonged to their party.

Mr. Underwood: You are wrong.

Mr. HUGHES: I listened to the quotation of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) which showed that the Labour Government voted for three representatives in the North-West.

Mr. Johnston: They were quite right in doing so.

Mr. Underwood: You are wrong.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member quoted from "Hansard."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill provided for three.

Mr. Underwood: Three, north of the tropic.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was amended.

Mr. HUGHES: The member for Williams-Narrogin quoted "Hansard" and I would be prepared to take the record of "Hansard" rather than the word of the member for Pilbara.

Mr. Underwood: I am speaking from memory.

Mr. HUGHES: If there is any mistake it is not my mistake.

Mr. Johnston: "Hansard" is quite right.

Mr. Underwood: It was for three north of the tropic.

Mr. HUGHES: I shall quote the Bill which was brought down in 1913. Clause 4 reads—

For the purpose of such division a quota of electors shall be as follows:—The total number of electors whose names appear upon the latest electoral rolls for the State, excepting the rolls for the electoral districts of Kimberley, Roebourne, Pilbara, and Gascoyne, shall be divided by 47 and the quotient shall be the quota of electors.

Mr. Underwood: Read on.

Mr. Johnston: The member for Pilbara moved an amendment that Gascoyne be struck out. That left three.

Mr. HUGHES: Notwithstanding that these seats were held by supporters of the Government and they were going to cut out one of their own supporters, they brought down a Bill to reduce the representation of the North-West to three.

Mr. Underwood: They did not.

Mr. HUGHES: I can only refer the hon. member to the Bill. There it is in black and white; surely he does not dispute it.

Mr. Johnston: Gascoyne is south of the tropic.

Mr. HUGHES: When the Labour Government were in office and it was considered equitable to bring about a reduction, they favoured it. The hon. member argues that we should adhere to this travesty on representative Government by allowing 4,000 people to have four representatives, while 84,000 have only 12.

Mr. Underwood: Your party introduced three and we cut one out.

Mr. HUGHES: I believe our system of representation could be greatly improved. We have only to take the constituencies of Perth, North Perth, Subiaco, and Leederville, four city constituencies which have 9,874 anti-Labour voters and 7,518 Labour voters. Notwithstanding that in these four constituencies Labour has 75 supporters against 97 opponents, we have only one member in this Chamber and the 9,700 anti-Labour voters have three representatives. That shows that the House is not representative and does not reflect the wishes of the people.

The Minister for Mines: Are you arguing one vote one value?

Mr. HUGHES: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: Then what about Cue and Yilgarn?

Mr. HUGHES: It takes three voters in Yilgarn to equal one in Roebourne.

The Minister for Mines: How many are equal to one in East Perth?

Mr. HUGHES: One in Roebourne has the value of 10 in East Perth—ten people who are doing the useful work of life in East Perth.

Mr. Marshall: Could not you detect that in Roebourne's representative?

The Minister for Mines: Do you say that making algae is doing useful work?

Mr. HUGHES: If a little more attention were paid to the welfare of the city, and the city were given but a small portion of the justice to which it is entitled, we would not have any difficulty at all. If we could only defect from the country sufficient money to pay a couple of men to clear up the foreshore, there would not be any difficulty from algae.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep to the Bill.

Mr. Underwood: Algae is not in it.

Mr. HUGHES: The position is worse when we come to the agricultural area. I have the figures for Albany, Avon, Greenough, Katanning, Northam and Swan. The only reason I include Swan is because it is embraced in the agricultural area. We all know it is not right that it should be so included. Swan is right at the back door of Perth. Had it been represented by a Labour man, it would have been classified as a metropolitan seat.

The Colonial Secretary: That is nonsense. It was represented by Labour and was an agricultural seat.

Mr. O'Loughlin: For three years only.

Mr. HUGHES: It would not have been included had it been represented by Labour at present.

The Minister for Mines: What about Albany?

Mr. HUGHES: I have nothing detrimental to say about Albany. In the six constituencies mentioned there are 7,008 anti-Labour voters and there are 4,896 Labour voters. Notwithstanding that the voting strength of Labour in these particular constituencies represents five out of every 12 voters, those districts are represented by six anti-Labour members. Therefore close on 5,000 electors have no representation at all. Those figures prove conclusively that we have not representative Government in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: How are you going to get over that?

Mr. HUGHES: The Minister knows quite well. If the Government had desired to give better representation and make Parliament the voice of the people, they would never have brought down such a Bill to aggravate the existing position where we have 7,000 electors enjoying six representatives and 5,000 electors in the same districts having no representation at all. It is a deplorable state of affairs.

The Minister for Mines: Why take those? Why not take the goldfields people?

Mr. A. Thomson: Because that would not suit.

The Minister for Mines: I am only suggesting it.

Mr. HUGHES: I have heard so much about the agricultural areas, and I thought it well to deal with them.

Mr. Johnston: Take the mining areas.

Mr. HUGHES: If we had our quota—

The Minister for Mines: What is the position in regard to representation. Never mind the quota.

Mr. HUGHES: It would be slightly in favour of members opposite. If a Bill were introduced to remedy that position we would vote for it. We want to make Parliament the voice of the people. When Labour members represented the North-West the Labour Government of the day were prepared to reduce the northern seats by one. No one will gainsay that redistribution now is necessary. Why not allow the commission, in whom all members would probably have confidence, to bring about a redistribution pure and simple without political interference. The Federal Parliament laid down a scheme of redistribution under which each vote has the same value. The commissioners are told in redistributing and allotting the electoral boundaries they must have a regard for certain fundamentals, such as distance from capital, transport facilities and community or diversity of interest. Those are the broad principles upon which the commission are authorised to draw electoral boundaries. Moreover, the commission are given a working margin of 20 per cent. above or 20 per cent. below the quota. We have had no complaints regarding Western Australian representation in the Federal House of Representatives, although eleven-twelfths of the area of this State is represented in the House of Representatives by one member.

The Minister for Mines: Do you want to institute that system in this House?

Mr. HUGHES: I want each man's vote to be of the same value, and I do not want special votes given to broad acres. I entirely agree that a constituency situated at a considerable distance from the seat of government should not be as large as one right alongside. I do not agree that Northam—a mere stone's throw from Perth—should have only 2,800 electors whilst Kalgoorlie, 400 miles away from Perth, is to have 3,400 electors. What about distance from the capital and facilities of transport in that instance? Swan, which is very close to Perth, a couple of hours' walk from Perth, is to have 2,800 electors also, but Kalgoorlie, distance a 16-hours' railway journey from Perth, must have 600 electors more.

The Minister for Works: Why do you pick out Swan?

Mr. HUGHES: Because it the most glaring case. The Minister knows that this gerrymandering is indulged in so that Swan may be made a safe seat.

The Minister for Works: Oh no!

Mr. HUGHES: Swan is given its classification as an agricultural area to make it a secure seat. The Minister knows that.

The Minister for Works: That is just what we do not know.

Mr. HUGHES: The Minister has been too long in the game not to know all about that sort of thing. If I knew as much as the Minister for Works knows, I might be able to go around my electorate and pick out just the electors who would vote for me.

The Minister for Works: I do not know anything of the kind.

Mr. HUGHES: Then the Minister must be the Government's step-child. Why do not the Government adopt the well-founded principles of community of interest, or diversity of interest, as the case may be, and transport facilities? Why do not the Government appoint three gentlemen free from political bias and say to them, "We want you to bring about redistribution of seats so as to ensure equitable representation?" If those gentlemen did not think a margin of one-fifth sufficient, it could be made 25 per cent. or even 33 per cent. above or below. And even then 5,000 people in the metropolitan area would be equal to only 3,000 people in the agricultural area as regards voting strength. The Bill appoints three commissioners ostensibly to bring about a redistribution of seats, but in actual fact there is no work for the commissioners to do. They are given no discretion whatever. They are tied hand and foot by the provisions of the Bill. All they can do is to take an electoral map and a schedule of enrolments for the various subdivisions, and rule off the boundaries on the map, so as to adjust the numbers. Why should a judge of the Supreme Court be called upon to do such work? It could be done by an office boy in the Electoral Department, and done by him in half an hour. In order to make out that here we have a bona fide redistribution of seats, all the paraphernalia of genuine redistribution is provided. A Supreme Court judge is to be appointed to rule a few lines on the map. Associated with him, we have the Surveyor General and the Chief Electoral Officer. All those three gentlemen can do, however, is to take a few electors out of one constituency and place them in another. In order to give the thing tone, in order to make it appear that there is a genuine effort at redistribution, the time of these three highly paid officials is to be wasted. The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) has 10,000 electors in his constituency, while the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) has about 4,000. Those facts are put forward as an excuse for reducing the voting strength of the Canning electors to one-sixth as compared with electors in the North-West. Some of the Canning electors could be shifted to other electorates, and a redistribution made in the metropolitan area. If the Government had decided upon a margin of 25 per cent. above or below, the metropolitan area would have got 19 seats, or five more than proposed under the Bill. Even if the Government desired to exempt the North-West from the operation of this Bill and to give that portion of the State four members, they could have

divided the remainder of the State equitably and allowed a proper margin to go on. During the course of the Federal election I did not hear of one of my friends opposite stumping the country against the Federal redistribution, which causes eleven-twelfths of the area of Western Australia to be represented by one member. There was not one word of protest from the anti-Labour forces against a scheme of redistribution which compels the representative of Kalgoorlie to represent Wyndham also. That was all right, because it suited hon. members opposite, and because the Federal political party which they are supporting did well out of it. There was no protest whatever from the Country Party.

Mr. Johnston: It is not a State matter, and so we could not do anything.

Mr. HUGHES: Nevertheless, it was a matter of great concern to hon. members opposite. They were all out electioneering. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party has had to toe the carpet because he went out electioneering. However, he has promised to be a good boy in future.

Mr. Latham: Your party have promised that I will be a good boy. No one else has.

Mr. HUGHES: When the hon. member was on the platform, he raised no protest whatsoever against the representative of Kalgoorlie being also the representative of Wyndham. No desire was expressed to give the North-West of this State another representative. In connection with this Bill, however, we are told that because the people will necessarily congregate in the city—and let me say that the industrial workers naturally must congregate where the factories are—because the clerical workers will congregate at headquarters—

The Minister for Works: If they all come into Perth, there will be nothing to support them.

Mr. HUGHES: If they all went out into the country, there would be no market for the products, and there would be no transport. If the Deputy Leader of the Country Party objects to people crowding into the cities, why did he not object to the creation of another useless industry here last week? He knew that if he voted against the Bill to which I refer, he would have to toe the carpet before the boss again.

Mr. Latham: Who is the boss?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member asks, who is the boss?

Mr. SPEAKER: The boss has nothing to do with this Bill. The hon. member had better keep to the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HUGHES: As I have pointed out, if the Government were desirous of having a thorough distribution of seats free from political considerations, they would have given some power to the commissioners and so would have got an independent and unbiassed recommendation. The Bill contains

an assurance that unless something phenomenal should happen, the government of the country will be handed over to the agricultural areas.

Mr. Latham: It would be a godsend for the country.

Mr. HUGHES: For that section of the community which the hon. member represents.

Mr. Latham: Since this party came into existence there has been more prosperity than was previously enjoyed.

Mr. HUGHES: Apparently the hon. member judges that measure of prosperity by the size of the deficit. If there be one thing more than another which demonstrates that the Bill is merely a political rump, it is the statement by the Premier that the central goldfields will have four seats, while the agricultural interests will have 22 or 23 seats. The central goldfields in their quota have 4.62, and as that is over $4\frac{1}{2}$, I take it that an independent commission would give the central goldfields five seats, that being the nearest whole number to the 4.62. On the same reasoning the agricultural districts, with a quota of 22.20, would get 22 seats instead of the 23 anticipated by the Premier. However, the Premier stated distinctly that it was intended to give the central goldfields four seats, which proves that the anti-goldfields policy of the Government is to be continued under the Bill. If the Government have nothing to fear from the results, why hamstring the commissioners? I hope the Premier will give at least some of his supporters leave to express their real opinions on the Bill.

The Premier: I did not deny you that leave.

Mr. HUGHES: It is a great pity the hon. member will not extend the same graciousness to some of his supporters.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: We are all free to vote as we like.

Mr. HUGHES: No doubt the hon. member will do so, and I hope he will raise his voice in protest against the iniquitous treatment to be meted out to the metropolitan constituencies. I will vote against the Bill, and I hope some of the Government supporters will at least have the courage to state their reasons for supporting the measure.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [7-42]: It does not require very much courage to speak one's own views in this House. No caucus meeting has directed me how to vote, nor am I held responsible by the Premier or any member of the Cabinet for anything I may do in respect of the Bill. I am here as a free agent. No suggestion has been made to me as to how I should vote or speak, or whether I should speak at all. I have listened to several members of the Opposition this afternoon, and I am utterly at a loss to know where they received their information. On no occasion since I have been in the House has a Minister or anybody else attempted to dictate to me which way I should vote. I have been left to use my own judgment, and I intend to continue doing so.

Mr. Willecock: The whip has been cracked from time to time.

Mr. RICHARDSON: No, I have always been left to vote as I choose. Had it been otherwise I should have strongly resented it. Just to show that I am in earnest, let me remark that I am not entirely in favour of the Bill. I have always believed that certain privileges must be extended to country electorates. It would be useless for any hon. member to think for a moment that the outside constituencies must have the same number in their electorates as we have in the metropolitan area. At the same time, if certain measures are laid down, as is the case in this Bill, if you say that you are going to give agricultural areas a quota of 3,000 and the metropolitan area a quota of 6,000, then the metropolitan members are quite justified in pointing out that they are entitled to 15 seats in the House. When I say the metropolitan area, I mean that part between Midland Junction and South Fremantle. So far as I can gather from the Premier's remarks, it is his intention to give only two additional seats to the metropolitan area and two to the agricultural areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What are they going to do with the other one that is floating about?

The Premier: Give it to East Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have knocked out North-East Fremantle altogether.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There appears to be one seat that has not been allocated.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier accounted for 49 and not 50.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am dealing with the four mentioned by the Premier, and the quota for the metropolitan area as three, and for the agricultural districts as one, but I am not prepared to say that even the central goldfields should have such a large quota as against that for the agricultural population, because I realise that the central goldfields are very far removed from the seat of government. Let us take into consideration also the possibility of the mining industry going down—I do not say that it will and I am sure no one hopes that it will—

Mr. Lutey: It is going up.

Mr. RICHARDSON: If it should go up then it will be necessary to provide more seats for the goldfields, and in my opinion the goldfields should at all times be entitled to fair and just representation, because whilst the agricultural population are doing a good deal and have done a lot for Western Australia, we cannot forget that it was the mining industry which first set Western Australia on its feet. For that reason we should not deal too harshly with those who live there, but rather should we give the industry a fillip by letting it have representation over and above, perhaps, what they actually deserve. I wish to deal with the metropolitan area. It has been pointed out that in some parts of Western Australia, in some of the electorates that are likely to be dealt with under the Bill, the number on the roll is something like 1,800. We have a provision in the Bill that we may take a fifth under or a fifth over. Take a metropolitan electorate which is going to be dealt with as against an electorate with 1,800. You may take a fifth off that 1,800 and bring the number down to 1,400, and you may have to add a fifth to a metropolitan seat and bring its total to over

7,000. Then we shall have representatives in this Chamber of 1,400 votes on the one hand, and 7,000 on the other. I think the difference is too great. For that reason I desire to enter a protest against anything less than three new seats being given to the metropolitan area. It has been said inside and outside this Chamber that men like Gladstone dealt with vested interests in regard to Parliament. It is nearly time that we in Western Australia who are members of a democratic institution, or one which is supposed to be such, dealt with human interests as well as vested interests. Mr. Gladstone said that London, being the seat of Parliament, did not deserve representation. He believed, as many others believed, that because the seat of Parliament is in the metropolitan area, and because those members who come from outside districts almost invariably live in the metropolitan area, or spend most of their time there, that therefore the metropolitan area is represented. But I draw the attention of members to the fact that those members who represent country interests in this Parliament do not represent the metropolitan area. That has been proved times out of number when anything affecting metropolitan interests has been brought forward. Only recently we had an example of the extent to which those members are prepared to go when they said that there was no occasion to spend money in the metropolitan area. I do not say that all members from the country are of that opinion, but the fact remains that some do hold it, and that shows the need for adequate representation in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Latham: We say you should control your own public services.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Why do you not control yours outside? You are not game.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will the member for York take on the I.A.B.?

Mr. RICHARDSON: We in the metropolitan area have to pay for all these things. We can point to the voting throughout this session and last session. It will be found that metropolitan members supported everything for the agricultural areas, as well as for the mining areas. But turn up "Hansard" and we will find that on many occasions the Country Party and others opposed anything that was likely to be of service to the metropolitan area. Unless we have our fair quota for the metropolitan area we are going to get short shrift indeed. I can plainly see that there are those in this Chamber who are not prepared to give anything to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Corboy: Are you prepared to back up your opinion with your vote?

Mr. RICHARDSON: You have never found me expressing an opinion and not voting in the same way. The position is that we in the metropolitan area, both metropolitan members on this side and on the other side of the House, are prepared to assist the agricultural and mining districts, because we realise that the metropolitan area cannot exist without the outside districts. For that reason we are always prepared to support them, but we do find that we are not receiving the reciprocal support that we should get.

The Premier: Oh yes.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We do not. I have pointed that out here on almost every occasion when the Estimates have been under consideration and also on the Address-in-reply. It comes back to me every time that nothing is mentioned in regard to the metropolitan area, and seeing that that is so, it behoves members of Parliament representing metropolitan electorates to see that when there is a redistribution we get a fair cut. Because of that I am not entirely in support of the Bill and I intend to oppose it. I do not believe, so far as I can gather from the Premier's speech, that the Premier desires that we should have more than two extra seats. If we take our quota even at 8,000 we have 90,000 electors between Midland Junction and South Fremantle. ■■■■

The Premier: You get your proportion.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We cannot agree with what the Premier has said and it is on that basis that I am going to oppose the Bill. If we are to get 15 members for the metropolitan area I might reconsider my decision, but at the present time I am imbued with the one idea that after the redistribution we shall have only 14 seats in the metropolitan area, while the agricultural areas are going to receive two more.

The Premier: You have not the voters.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We have the voters. Anyway I am taking no risks. The time has now arrived when something must be done in regard to the distribution, and I am satisfied that every member agrees something must be done. The quota in some places to-day is so small that it is practically infinitesimal, and members are sitting here feeling that they are not justified in representing such small constituencies.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not see the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) blushing.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The hon. member would have won his electorate even had there been 5,000 on the roll, because he has more than fulfilled his public duties.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I thought you said they might feel uncomfortable.

Mr. RICHARDSON: We find there are some members who represent between 8,000 and 9,000 while others represent between 800 and 700. The quota is too big in some, and too small in other electorates. The question arises as to how we are going to regulate the figures. The Premier has set down a certain quota, but in speaking to the Bill he said this quota would not be maintained in the metropolitan area. If we have 90,000 electors between Midland Junction and South Fremantle, then I contend that even with the very large quotas, double what he has proposed for the agricultural areas, we are fully entitled to 15 representatives in this Chamber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are very moderate in your requests.

Mr. RICHARDSON: If the figures were worked out on the number and the basis of those in the agricultural areas compared with the metropolitan area, then we would have 20 members. But we are not asking for that. I am prepared to give the Government a fair chance in regard to this matter. I realise that there are many difficulties in creating a redistribution. But when it comes to a question of the difference in the quotas, I do consider that when we have a quota of 6,000 in the metropol-

itan area, we are justified in asking that the full quota be maintained. When we find the quota is not maintained in the agricultural areas we are still justified in saying that the representation should be cut down. Why the Premier sees fit to ask for two new members in the agricultural areas and only two in the metropolitan area, I fail to understand. I have worked out the figures and listened to members who have spoken, and yet I cannot see any justification for the metropolitan area having less than two new members. I am not prepared to support the Bill until the Premier gives that assurance. So far as I know, and I believe I am speaking for all members on this side of the House, no pressure has been brought to bear upon anyone as to speaking in connection with this Bill.

Mr. Mann : Or in connection with any other.

Mr. RICHARDSON : Or as to the manner in which he should vote. I hope if the Bill is passed, the metropolitan area will receive that small degree of justice we are asking for, namely, three new members, making a total of 15.

Mr. WILLCOCK : I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | ... | ... | 15 |
| Noes ... | ... | ... | ... | 25 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|----|
| Majority against ... | ... | 10 |
|----------------------|-----|----|

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Clydesdale | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Leighen |
| Mr. Lutey | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Carter | Mr. Piesse |
| Mrs. Cowan | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Denton | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. George | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Mann | (Teller.) |

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8-7] : When the Premier introduced the Bill he said it was necessary owing to the changing conditions of the country and to the fact that the goldfields population had declined, and that the number of electors in the metropolitan areas had increased. If these be the only reasons for the Bill they form an indictment against the present administration. If the population of the goldfields has decreased and that of the metropolitan areas has increased.

the policy of the Government has been entirely responsible. I admit the population of the goldfields has decreased. This is due to the fact that very little assistance has been given to the goldmining industry as against that accorded to others, and that the population in the goldfields areas has been burdened by excessive railway freights. It would not be untrue to say that the policy of the Government during the past four or five years has been responsible for the backward state of the mining industry, and the depletion of the population in the back country. It is utterly impossible to carry on industry where the people receive very little assistance, where their requests are frequently ignored, and where they are handicapped by the excessive charges for the transport of their commodities.

The Premier : They could not be reduced much more from Sandstone.

Hon. M. F. TROY : The people are leaving the back country because there is no opportunity there for their children to learn any trade or calling. It is the usual thing to hear people there say, "We have to get out of this in order to give our children the opportunity we cannot give them here." Whilst the bread winner may work in the back country he sends his wife and family to the city with this object in view. The Government have been neglectful of the back country in this respect. They have treated people in remote areas in an utterly unsympathetic manner.

The Premier : Not at all.

Mr. Underwood : They would be sympathetic if the remote parts were given more representation than the metropolitan area.

Hon. M. F. TROY : This is not a metropolitan Government. It depends for its support almost entirely upon representatives of the agricultural districts. The Bill provides that agricultural districts shall receive an increase of two in their representation. The Government cannot deny on the figures at least two more members for the metropolitan area. If the Government do deny that it will amount to glaring inconsistency, and will hold up the whole scheme of the Government to contempt, derision, and ridicule. They are not, however, taking that risk. In almost every discussion that has taken place in this House the Government have treated the goldmining industry as a transitory enterprise.

The Premier : Not at all.

Hon. M. F. TROY : They say the gold is being worked out, and the population is gradually disappearing. They look upon the people on the goldfields as migratory. The Government have never provided adequate conveniences for the back country. If anyone approaches the Workers' Homes Board for homes in the back country he is met with a refusal. It is not the Government policy to build in the back country.

The Minister for Works : What about the Government buildings in Kalgoorlie and other goldfields centres ?

Hon. M. F. TROY : People in the back blocks have to wait eight or nine years before a school is provided for the education of their children. I know that is so in one particular case.

Mr. Underwood : That is good for them.

Hon. M. F. TROY : Fortunately the hon. member is not the judge in this case. One of the special features of the Bill is that the State

is divided into various districts, and certain quotas are allotted to them. The metropolitan quota is 6,062, for which the area will receive 14 seats as against those which it enjoys to-day. The outer mining district will have a quota of 1,874 and will secure five seats as against nine to-day. The agricultural district quota is 2,993 and those districts will enjoy 22 seats as against the present number. The central goldfields district will have a quota of 3,413 and enjoy the same number of seats as to-day, namely four.

The Premier: I said that is how it might work out.

Mr. Willcock: You said the tendency was for the goldfields to go down.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The calculation shows that the Bill has been engineered to reduce the democratic representation of the goldfields. The country interests in the agricultural districts and others are to profit by increased representation. I am not going to stress the claims of the metropolitan area. If it had no representation in Parliament, it would have the greatest influence on the government of the country.

Mr. Latham: That is perfectly true.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It would have more influence than all the rest of the country put together. In the metropolitan district there is the largest closely settled population in the State, whose voice is heard from day to day. The seat of government is in the city. People of the metropolitan area have access to Ministers and to Parliament.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Most country members are prejudiced against the metropolitan area.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The area is represented by a Press which exaggerates the importance of almost every subject brought under the notice of the Government. The result is that, if the metropolitan areas had no representation at all, they would still have considerable influence with the Government of the country and the good things the Government can provide. I do not think I need labour that point, because it must be generally understood by members who represent back-country constituencies, and who know how difficult it is to secure justice, when they find themselves as a voice crying in the wilderness. In any scheme of redistribution of seats, the metropolitan area must secure justice and increased representation on account of numbers, notwithstanding the manner in which the people came here, the conditions under which they live, or what their living here means to the country. The metropolitan people are entitled to representation according to their numbers. The people who live in the back country, who are pioneering and bearing the heat and burden of the day in opening up the State, are entitled to all the representation we can reasonably give them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Hear! Hear! Yet the Government want to take away their representation. Members: We do not.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yee, you do. You want to take four seats from the goldfields.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have always held the opinion that the man who takes his family into the back country and who thus deprives them of the opportunities enjoyed in the city and of the social advantages here, is entitled to adequate representation in Parliament, seeing that he takes his family to live in places where there

are adverse climatic conditions, where the work is hard, but where their occupation is of more service to the State than that of the people who live in more settled places. These people could not exist but for the enterprise of those in the back country. I have always stood for that principle, but, at the same time, I do not stand for the principle of one vote one value. I can understand that in England and America, or in any country where the population is distributed in large centres of industrial activity, one vote one value may be justified, but in a country like Western Australia, the pioneer is entitled to more consideration in regard to his representation in this Chamber because of his distance from the capital, and the disabilities under which he labours.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That individual always got that consideration until this Bill was introduced.

Hon. M. F. TROY: He will get it still if I can gain it for him. My objection to the Bill is that it singles out the central goldfields area in particular, for unfavourable consideration compared with the agricultural districts. People engaged in the occupation of mining in the eastern goldfields are a valuable adjunct to the industrial life of this State. They are engaged in an industry which has produced more wealth than all the other industries of the State put together. I heard the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) give the House figures regarding the value of different industries in Western Australia, but when I tell him that the value of gold produced in this country represents 145 million pounds he will realise that it will take a long time before the other industries will reach that figure. I do not wish to make depreciatory remarks regarding other industries. That is not my intention, but the people residing in Kalgoorlie, hundreds of miles away from the coast, under harsh climatic conditions, following a hard occupation, are entitled to more consideration because of their great services to the State. I am never surprised when I hear the women on the goldfields say that their boys will not go down a mine. They say that because they know that the fathers of those children will die an early death by reason of their occupation. If the Government have accorded this differential treatment to the agricultural districts in recognition of the services rendered by that industry to the State, we should expect the Government to extend similar consideration to those who built up the valuable gold mining industry. Every other industry has been built up on the mining industry, and the Government lost sight of that aspect when they made the quota for the agricultural districts 2,900 as against a quota of 3,420 for the eastern goldfields electorates. Take the Swan electorate represented by the Colonial Secretary. That electorate is within a stone's throw of the city. The people can come into the city any day to approach the Government, and can stand on the doorstep of Ministers every day to secure redress for their grievances. They secure distinct advantages compared with the rest of the people of the State, yet the quota for the agricultural constituencies is 500 less than for the goldfields electorates. Take the Premier's constituency of Northam. It is one that can be covered by the hon. member in one day; in fact, the Premier would cover it

in two hours in a motor car. It is within easy distance of the city; yet it is classed as a remote agricultural district, and its quota is 500 less than that of electorates three or four hundred miles away from the city. The same applies to the Murray-Wellington electorate where a man may leave the city and reach the electorate before lunch.

The Minister for Works: That shows all you know about it. You can go there by train but it is certainly not within a stone's throw of Perth.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Residents in that electorate can come to Perth easily, and have their grievances redressed without much expense. The people there do not depend on their representation in this House to the extent that the people in the back country are required to do.

The Minister for Works: Certainly not to that extent.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yet the Murray-Wellington electorate has a smaller quota than electorates on the eastern goldfields which are 400 miles away from Perth! The same applies to York and Avon to a less degree than to some of the other agricultural districts.

The Minister for Works: I have 2,000 square miles in my electorate.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister is bound to have something remarkable. Perhaps he does not know that the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) has an electorate comprising 100,000 square miles. Whereas the quota for the Swan electorate, which is so close to Perth, is 2,993, that for South Fremantle which is a similar electorate—there can be no distinction between them because the Swan electorate is just as adjacent to Perth as the South Fremantle electorate—is fixed at 4,062.

The Colonial Secretary: There are no large centres of primary production.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There are many centres of primary production in the South Fremantle electorate. There are Jandakot, Coogee, Spearwood, and a number of other places. The same thing may be said of Northam, Moore, and Bunbury.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Swan electorate is a scandal, in any case!

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is my objection to the Bill. If the Government were to group the goldfields districts together—there is no justification for singling out the eastern goldfields—they would find the people to make up the quota, on the basis provided by the Bill, that we give the goldfields one more seat and not two more. The only reason for segregating the eastern goldfields from the rest of the goldfields electorates is to reduce the quota of the other goldfields constituencies, and thus deprive them of representation. The Premier said when introducing the Bill that one thing to be considered was community of interests. If that be so, why make a distinction between the different parts of the goldfields areas? Why should there be one quota for one set of people who are engaged in the mining industry and another quota for others engaged in the mining industry in another part? If the Government's proposal is right, why does it not also apply to the agricultural districts? Why is there not a different quota for agricultural districts which are easily accessible, when compared with other agricultural

districts which are more remote? The reason is that some of the agricultural districts could not get the quota provided in the Bill. I do not wish to make any invidious comparison regarding the North-West. I am not quarrelling with the representation of that part of the State. I realise the vast area over which the scattered population resides, but I contend that there are constituencies in the North-West to-day whose position is not more difficult than that of some of the outer goldfields areas. The Gascoyne electorate is not an isolated district. It is within 24 hours of Geraldton. A motor car leaving Carnarvon to-day, can be in Geraldton within 24 hours. That has actually been done. One of the great disadvantages urged in connection with the Gascoyne electorate has been its isolation. The means of communication were said to be slow, uncertain, and difficult to secure. To-day, owing to the aeroplanes, the North-West has a better mail service than many of the mining districts. It takes a week to get a letter delivered in my constituency and we have two mails per week. With the advantage of the aërial mail service mails can be delivered in the Gascoyne electorate within a couple of hours.

Mr. Teesdale: In some parts we get a mail once a month. In some parts the electors reside 300 miles inland.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Gascoyne is no more isolated than are the electorates in the remote mining areas. I wish to make it clear that I am not complaining of the representation given to the North, but I do complain that there should be a distinction in favour of Gascoyne, a constituency on the coast and enjoying rapid means of mail communication, as against the treatment meted out to Murchison and Leonora. The district of Murchison touches the South Australian border and joins the Pilbara district. There are places in that electorate more remote than Gascoyne, and yet Gascoyne is to have a member for every 1,000 electors as against 2,000 required in the Murchison. That is not reasonable. The Premier stated that, except for the metropolitan area and exclusive of the North West, population had increased but he need not have included the North-West because the population there has decreased. In 1911 the electors of the Gascoyne district numbered 1,811, whereas to-day the number is only 1,573; Kimberley in 1911 had 1,726 electors, whereas to-day it has 1,346; Pilbara in 1911 had 1,131 electors whereas to-day it has only 724, and Roebourne in 1911 had 1,093 as against 614 to-day. Those figures are taken from the "Statistical Abstract" issued a few days ago, and prove that since 1911 the population of the electorates of the North has decreased by 1,500. Yet those electorates are singled out for special treatment, while other portions of the country are to be penalised because the population there has decreased. There should be no distinction whatever between the treatment meted out to the Gascoyne and the Murchison districts; and the same can be said of Leonora. Probably this applies also to Mt. Margaret, because that electorate extends to the South Australian border and God knows where else. Probably the Speaker himself who represents it does not know. If the elector of Pilbara, numbering only 724, are entitled to a member, how can the same treatment be denied

a member whose territory extends to the South Australian border and whose population is scattered right through it? I do not wish to deprive those people of representation, but a Bill which makes the distinctions which this Bill proposes is not entitled to pass the second reading. I do not mind a redistribution of seats Bill, but such a Bill should not be a party measure.

Mr. Latham: It was made a party measure previously.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Members on the Government side have declared that they have never been consulted regarding the measure.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Only one, who was not at the meeting.

Hon. M. F. TROY: This Bill would have passed the second reading without debate but for the opposition from this side of the House.

Mr. Latham: That is what the Opposition are for.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Speaker was putting the question, and the Bill would have passed its second reading without debate but for us. The only speeches made from the other side are those brought forth as a result of the discussion on this side of the House. Members supporting the Government are evidently unanimous that a Bill of this description is of such little worth that they need not give it one moment's attention or one word of discussion. I repeat that such a Bill should not be a party measure. I would like to see it referred to a select committee representative of all the parties interested.

Mr. Harrison: That is what the Bill is for—to appoint a commission.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Bill lays down certain definite principles on which the commission must act. I have nothing to say regarding the commissioners. I have no objection to them; I suppose they are as good as any three commissioners I could suggest. Someone has to do the work. But the commissioners are not entitled to use their own judgment. The Bill lays down certain specific instructions, and on those instructions they must bring in a redistribution. They have no judgment except as regards community of interest and boundaries. The quota is fixed for them and their work is to consider community of interest, but I do not know that they can do much in that direction, because in many of the electorates one interest has been mixed up with another. The Bill ought to go to a select committee who could consider it reasonably and straight-forwardly and present a recommendation to the House. If it is wise to refer other perplexing measures to select committees, it is equally reasonable to have this measure so considered. I would prefer proportional representation, because it would give every section of thought and opinion representation. I was told by a gentleman who contested the Irwin seat at the last election that what struck him was the big number of Labour supporters who would not vote at all. He said, "I was sanguine that I would get their votes and would win easily, but they did not vote at all." Those people therefore are without representation in their electorate. There is elected a member with whose views they have nothing in common. The same applies to the constituency I represent and, in fact, to all constituencies. There are people in my electorate who would not vote

for me. These people are diminishing in numbers, but there are some who do not like my representation and who hold entirely different views. Time after time they are disappointed at seeing elected a man who does not represent them. They do not vote at all. I do not like to see them disappointed. After the last election I can claim to represent 90 per cent. of the people in my electorate, but this still leaves 10 per cent. who do not want my views expressed in this House. The principles I stand for are anathema to them. Right through the country there are a great many electors who are thus disappointed. Election after election members are returned with whose policy they do not agree and whose Parliamentary representation they feel is an injury to them. Therefore, I believe in proportional representation which would provide that every industry, every interest, every class in this country would have the representation it was entitled to. These are the only means by which the people in this country will get what this Bill pretends to provide for them, namely fair representation in the Parliament of Western Australia. I do not like the Bill for the reasons I have given. Members opposite will have to justify to me why people living in the remote areas and under the worst climatic conditions, engaged in an industry so valuable to this country as to produce 128 million pounds worth of wealth and on which every other industry has grown up and which still supports a large population, are not given the representation to which they are entitled. If members on the cross benches, who are alleged to represent the country interests though I deny that they do so—

Mr. Harrison: Naturally.

Hon. M. F. TROY: How could I naturally deny it, inasmuch as I myself represent country interests? Members on the cross benches claim it as their special mission in this Chamber to represent the country interests and to put aside all metropolitan claims which to an extent are just, but how can they justify the distinction made in this Bill under which miners in the Kalgoorlie area are to have representation on a quota of over 3,000 as against a quota of 500 less in the agricultural area situated nearer to the seat of government and enjoying better climatic conditions? This is not a reasonable proposal and on that ground I oppose the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| Noes ... | ... | ... | ... | 25 |
| Majority against | | | | 11 |

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lutey |
| Mr. Cheeson | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Glydesdale | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Loghlen |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. James Mitchell |
| Mr. Carter | Mr. Piesse |
| Mrs. Cowan | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Denton | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. George | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Mann | (Teller.) |

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [8.48]: What strikes me is the silence of members opposite regarding this Bill. Generally, when the Government bring down a Bill, its vindication or justification is attempted by at least half a dozen members on that side of the House. To-night it has been alleged that a caucus meeting was called by the Government, and that, as a result, this has been made a Government measure. The allegation has not been denied officially, and therefore it stands. If two or three of the members sitting opposite were absent from that caucus meeting, that does not alter the fact that this Bill represents the most pronounced of party measures. Judging from appearances, it has been introduced largely with the idea of conserving the interests of Government supporters at the next appeal to the country. None of us will deny that redistribution of seats is necessary. If the Government were consistent in their policy and allowed the commissioners under the Bill, in whom I have every confidence, to bring in a recommendation to this Parliament, I would not oppose the measure.

Mr. Latham: But some directions must be laid down for their guidance.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member would lie down occasionally, we would make more progress. Only six weeks ago this House set up a board to deal with the very intricate problem of the liquor trade. The Licensing Act Amendment Act does not tie the hands of the members of that board. More confidence was placed by Parliament in their hands than this Bill proposes to place in the hands of the three commissioners. I shall not repeat the figures which have been quoted, since no amount of argument can alter their glaring inconsistency. Swan and Kal-goorlie are a case in point.

The Premier: What about Forrest?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Forrest is in the same position, Mr. Speaker, as your electorate. Will anyone assert that your electorate, one of the remotest in Western Australia, is down and out for good? There is every prospect of a revival of the mining industry. As regard my own electorate, had it not been for the gerrymandering policy of the Premier's party years ago, before the hon. gentleman himself was in Parliament, the Forrest electorate would never have been created. It has no right to exist as a constituency in its present form. It is a constituency without a town inside its borders, and not touching the railway line. It is away back in the Darling Range, where a fugitive from justice might find sanctuary. It is up on the top of the

hills because it is dotted with sawmills. It was feared by the Liberal Party of the long ago that if there were two or three sawmills in each of four or five electorates, the whole lot of those electorates would fall to the democratic party. So they thought, "We had better make one safe democratic seat of the sawmills, the safest seat in Australia, and so secure the other electorates for ourselves." The Forrest electorate reflects no credit on the Parliament which created it, and the present Bill will reflect no credit on this Parliament if it is carried in the small hours of the morning.

The Premier: Such things have been said about every Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But on this occasion they can be said with justification.

The Premier: No.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is obvious that the Government side are ashamed of the Bill. Otherwise members opposite would speak in support of the measure. Why is the member for Claremont silent? Why does he shake his wise old head? Why do not members opposite justify a Bill which proposes to take away nine seats from the goldfields and give them to that power which upholds the Premier and his nine supporters in this Assembly?

The Premier: Your Bill did worse than that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No; and, in any case, many things have been changed since 1913. Since then the Premier has been a lone figure on the other side of the House. When he moved his motion of want of confidence in the Lefroy Government, he got only one vote from all the figures surrounding him. However, remarkable things happen in Western Australia. The man who a few years ago was sitting alone and scarcely able to find more than one supporter, who was disparaged and discredited, who was described as the wrecker of the country by his land settlement policy, now receives unquestioning support. It does not matter what he proposes, members behind him will vote for it. In the very last extremity the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) and the member for Perth (Mr. Mann), who stood at the door during the caucus meeting, would place themselves one on each side of him and say, "We are sticking to you, Jim." The Premier mentioned the Forrest electorate

The Premier: It has been very well represented in this House.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not going to agree to that statement. I have not been able to do very much for the people in that electorate. The Forrest electorate is very much like your electorate, Mr. Speaker, and mining electorates generally. We are told about a revival in the North-West, about prospects of trade expansion, of oil gushers breaking out, of cows having more calves, of cotton growing. There is just as great a possibility of revival of the mining industry. My electorate is at present under a depression. Mills which should carry a big population are standing idle. They have been idle for some time. If they started again, it would put another 1,500 people in my electorate. The mills were erected at very great cost, and the necessary houses are all there; and such propositions are not going to be abandoned. My electorate, suffering a merely temporary

depression, will be unfairly dealt with under the allocation proposed by the Bill. If the quota were the same as it was two years ago, the population of my electorate would be far in excess of that required for a country seat. It is unfair that advantage should be taken of the temporary misfortune of certain localities.

Mr. Mann: Would not the commissioners consider those things?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The commissioners are not given the right to consider them. If the commissioners were given a free hand, I would support the Bill. If the measure passes, we on this side will need to be very lucky to secure a majority even if the country is at our back. It is remarkable that there is not more sanity in Australian electoral laws. I personally have often wondered why we have not adopted proportional representation.

Mrs. Cowan: Hear, Hear!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am glad to hear the lady member say "Hear, hear." Later, I shall move an amendment in that direction if no one else does so, and I shall be very glad if the lady member will support such an amendment.

Mr. Latham: It is a wonder proportional representation was not put up in 1913.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We gather experience as we go along. The member for York (Mr. Latham) is not a bad chap personally, but he has a lot yet to learn about democratic representation of the people.

Mr. Latham: I am going to a good school.

Mr. Lambert: But you are a very bad scholar.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Can the member for York find any justification for the election of the Federal Senate such as we have it to-day? If there is one thing that calls for suppression, it is the Senate of Australia. It is nothing but an expensive duplication. We have there a group of men elected for a term of six years. The founders of Federation thought the Senate was going to be a measure of protection for the smaller States, that State rights would be conserved by the Senate; but never once has the Senate acted as a defender of State rights. The Senate has always been of the same political complexion as the party in power in the House of Representatives—Labour or Liberal, as the case might be. We have had the awful spectacle of 1,040,000 voters going Nationalist and 856,000 voters going Labour, and the Nationalists securing 35 Senate seats and Labour securing one.

The Premier: Even electorates, you know.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I realise that the Senate has never carried out the functions for which it was originally intended.

The Premier: This Bill does not deal with the Senate.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Premier wants me to deal with the Bill exclusively, I can do that. However, I am drawing a comparison to show the futility of the electoral laws and electoral systems obtaining in Australia to-day. I illustrate the futility by calling attention to the fact that one political machine is able to capture practically the entire representation of the State, leaving to an almost equally strong party hardly any representation whatever.

In my opinion, whether it be the State or Federal Parliament every considerable section of the people should have a right to make their aspirations articulate inside those walls. They cannot do that under the present system. They have to be strong enough to win outright, or else they have to go under. There is no room for independents. Independents are as scarce as sovereigns. The machine operates on both sides, and the man who stands up against it is crushed. Big sets of people in Australia are not enamoured of the work of either machine, yet they are denied representation. Why cannot we have proportional representation on the group system, instead of single electorates? The present system is wrong. I am surprised at the Premier refusing to attempt to justify a political scandal in the composition of the Swan electorate, and the extraordinarily high quota for Kalgoorlie. Why make a distinction between Kalgoorlie and the outer mining districts?

The Premier: We are giving increased mining representation.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You are not. You are fixing a higher quota for Kalgoorlie than for your own electorate.

The Premier: I am not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You are. The Bill provides it.

The Premier: It does not.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Does the hon. member think that Swan should have a smaller quota than Kalgoorlie, or even the same quota? Does he think at the bottom of his heart—

Mr. Lambert: If he has a heart at all.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I think he has. It is the first nefarious measure he has introduced. Others were for the benefit of the State, but this is for the benefit of the party.

The Premier: No.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, for the benefit of that group to which I have pointed.

The Premier: That is wrong.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is not. I will stick to it.

The Premier: Well, I will go to sleep.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You can go to sleep now. The Country Party to-day is in a strong position numerically. When a man gets a little power he becomes arrogant and dictatorial. Even you, Sir, have sometimes used your power from the Chair. I did not think it altogether like your old self when down here. The Country Party are getting increased power and are asking for more than they are going to get.

The Minister for Agriculture: How do you know what they are asking for? Do you believe what you see in the Press?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Not altogether. Yet it is remarkable how ready the Minister is to quote a statement in the Press against us. The Country Party are making a demand for the Prime Ministership, and four portfolios. It shows their arrogance and their greed.

Mr. Johnston: It is only because they desire to do something.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It shows their desire to do the Prime Minister out of his job. However, what I am concerned with is the group of 18 here, who at their meeting said, "Now is our opportunity, with dying goldfields towns and depressed mining districts."

The Premier: You do them an injustice in saying that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well, let them get up and defend the Bill.

The Premier: No, you apologise.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will not apologise for the truth, which is that the metropolitan area with its vastly increased population is to get two additional seats, while the agricultural areas also are to get two in addition to what they have.

Mr. Mann: You do not know what they will get under the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I know what is provided, what the commissioners are directed to bring in, and I will bet all I have that the member for Perth will not go counter to the commissioners' proposal.

The Premier: Have you read the Bill?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes. It contains a lot which the Premier has not read. In Committee there are bound to be amendments devised with a view to improving the Bill. I would rejoice if the Bill were defeated on the second reading, because that would enable the Government to bring down another Bill, giving the commissioners a free hand in drawing up a good scheme. I would even prefer to see the Bill go to a select committee; because it is a highly contentious measure and I know the feeling of resentment created in 1911. Many a man was returned to this Parliament in opposition to the iniquitous proposals of the Redistribution of Seats Bill of that year, under which the electorates were carved up for party purposes. It was the most awful scandal ever perpetrated in this State, and the people rose in their anger and said, "No more of this." I think they will rise again over this Bill. Even conservative strongholds of that time were moved to bitterness against that Bill. I remember helping a candidate who is in the House to-night. It was a treat to hear his eloquent orations against the Wilson Government over the dastardly trick they played on the State. I was helping the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston). We were in a sulky and he had a map of Western Australia about 22 feet long, showing all the new electoral boundaries. The map extended out past the horse's head, and every time we turned a corner I had to get out and hold the map. Out east of Narrogin, where there were a great many new settlers, my young and hopeful friend was speaking on the great ideals of democracy. He was in a little short coat, and had in his hand a dinky little cane. He was pointing out how the Government were filching a seat from this or that party, and getting a few more electors pushed hither and thither. He even related how dear old Mr. Cowcher had a finger in the pie, in that he had 89 relatives out on the western side who were not going to be disturbed. "But all you new arrivals from the goldfields, for whom my heart bleeds," went on the candidate, "they have cut you out." He brought down the meeting, and even I felt moved by his eloquence. It seemed to me good stuff. We got back to Narrogin and on the Monday morning we started out on the western side of the electorate, where there were none but old established families who had been there for about 100 years, and consequently were not au-fait with the doings of Parliament. About two miles out I said, "Bertie, where is the map?" He said, "I do not bring the map

out to the western side." That night at Williams he never mentioned redistribution, but he told them that he was a native born Western Australian and proud of his country, and that if the electors did him the honour of putting him into Parliament he would see that their district was developed, and that their children had opportunity to become bright and shining ornaments of this great and prosperous State. I went to every meeting with him, and the way he condemned that proposal—

Mr. Johnston: I would condemn the same proposal again.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. To-night he is supporting a Bill designed for the very same purpose. If the hon. member had stuck to the principles he advocated then, he would not be supporting the Bill to-night.

Mr. Johnston: I pointed out the inconsistency in the Kalgoorlie electorate before you came in.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: A little child could point that out. The point is, you are going to vote for the Bill.

Mr. Johnston: For the second reading, and will help amend it in Committee if necessary.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We know how the member will vote, because he is going to help the group with whom he is associated.

Mr. Johnston: Going to help the country.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Going to help the Country Party, whose views sometimes do not coincide with the interests of the country. I honestly think the metropolitan area is not getting sufficient representation in the two extra seats. The one vote one value cannot be defended in Australia to the same extent as it can in other countries of dense populations in compact areas, but we should not go too far on the other track. We ought to give a fair crack of the whip to remote mining districts as well as to remote agricultural areas.

The Minister for Mines: The member for East Perth did not say so.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister also is a member of that little group that has the whip.

The Minister for Mines: It is all to their advantage.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is quite possible that they will go on until the people of the metropolitan area declare that they have had enough. Even the member for Roebourne—

Mr. Teesdale: Why pick me?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Because the hon. member has flashes of wisdom at times. There are occasions when the hon. member can see a hole through a ladder, and on those occasions he knows that the stealthy advance of a selfish party—

Mr. Lambert: The spring onion crowd.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will not call them that, because I was born on a farm and my father and five brothers are all farmers. All the same the farmer is the most selfish unit in the State to-day.

The Minister for Mines: You ought to know in those circumstances.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I know it is true.

Mr. Johnston: Look at the burdens he is carrying.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And what burdens are you carrying? Are you farming? No. You are building up a bank balance by some other means. You carrying a burden! The hon. member knows better than anyone else that in the dark days of agriculture the people of the State and particularly of the metropolitan area, stood behind the members of this House when the Treasury was thrown open and money literally shovelled into the agricultural districts.

Mr. Johnston: For the benefit of the whole State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I grant that; but surely there is a little gratitude at times. The present Minister for Mines was the head of the Government at that time.

The Minister for Mines: I shall have to carry to my grave what I did then.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister for Mines will carry the heartfelt thanks and the blessings of those people who are now in comfortable circumstances. What position would they have been in to-day but for what the Labour Government did for them at that time? The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) will admit that since then he has not had a fraction of assistance for his electorate. At our caucus meetings he used to talk these matters over and he was the white hope. You, Mr. Speaker, were there. Don't you remember that we were a party of 33 and there were only two who represented the agricultural districts. We thought in our simplicity and innocence that it would be possible to win the farmers' vote and that to do so we would do our best to encourage those two who were with us. We thought to ourselves, "We had better go quietly and not put up any request." The result was that the member for Williams-Narrogin got everything tipped into Narrogin. Naturally then he became the most popular man in the State.

Mr. Johnston: Did I get anything that was not justified?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But as soon as he milked the cow dry he turned her out and shot her. He left the party. As soon as he saw that the head of the Scaddan Government was beginning to lose strength, the hon. member said, "I am going to get off this barge and climb on to the raft." He got on to a pretty good raft too, and rowed himself away. He landed well on his feet and I congratulate him on his acumen and foresight. But do not let him tell me that he has not been favoured by fortune, and do not let him tell me that the farmer is carrying all the burdens. My electors in those days had little to hope for; they were working for reduced hours and more wages.

Mr. Latham: The farmer works longer hours than anybody.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But the farmer has something to look forward to. While he sleeps the wool grows; while he sleeps his crop grows.

Mr. Latham: And while he sleeps his accounts too are growing and his interest is growing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Look at the income received by the farmer as compared with that of the wage earner. What is the prospect of the wage earner? The farmer always has a chance; not so the wage earner. The farmer may be hit by a drought, but so long as he is there fighting he has a chance of pulling through and building up a competence for himself. Even the prospector has a better chance than has the wages man. His pick in the ground may reveal something good for him, but the wages man goes along like a drudge from one year's end to the other rearing his family without any prospect of being able to retire except to collect the old age pension. The farmer is in a very different position on account of what was done for him by the Scaddan Government. To-day those men who were helped own motor cars. The town of Narrogin is the most prosperous town in Western Australia. We shovelled money into agriculture and it turned up trumps. Other places too justified their claims for assistance, but did not get it.

Mr. Johnston: We have not had a bob since.

Mr. Marshall: Open confession is good for the soul.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: When I hear the member for York talking about the poverty of the farmer I am reminded of the fact that within the last six or eight months I have attended a few picnics at little wayside places along the Dowerin-Merredin line and that at those picnics I counted no fewer than 27, 35, 42 and in one case 51 motor cars.

Mr. Latham: They were agents' cars.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Will the hon. member tell us how it is that the Country Party are out against their inveterate enemy, the agent? Does the hon. member mean to tell me they are agents' cars? They are the farmers' cars, and the farmers take their wives and children to these gatherings in their own cars. It demonstrates that the farmer is not in a bad way. Thanks to the party of which the present Minister for Mines was the head. The man on the land in my opinion is a little bit ungrateful. He will say, "Yes, we were a bit lucky; we got a few duds from the other side." Even the member for Claremont—

Mr. J. Thomson: Why bring me in?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member went into it himself. The farmers will admit that ours was a truly generous party to them. We gave them water supplies, the I.A.B. loans, and the Agricultural Bank. I will admit that there are a couple of members in this House, the members for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) and Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) who acknowledged what was done by the Scaddan Government for the farmers. All the same, every farmer who to-day goes

to the ballot box will say, "Oh, the young chap for York will do me," and no one else can get a look in at the picture. The dominant party is the farmers' party, and they are to get increased representation—two seats.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Three in all probability.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course it may work out to the advantage of Western Australia. I think the farmers have done very well, and if they do not go along on moderate lines and deprive the great body of the people of the representation to which they are entitled, those people might rise and vote against the party the Government are allied with. At any rate the opportunity will come along in 12 or 14 months' time.

The Minister for Mines: Why spoil our sleep by referring to something that is 14 months ahead?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Hon. members had better make the most of the position.

Mr. Mann: Your nature would not permit you to be vindictive.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am thinking of the rod in pickle for the hon. member. I know two or three who are after his scalp, and he will have to get up pretty early to retain it. He hopes, I suppose, that the Commissioners will include in his electorate what he wants from West Perth and rob our lady member of the bulk of her support. However, the Commissioners can attend to that. The Government are taking a risk; they are gambling a lot, and some members will vote for their political death warrant by casting out the rural areas which belong to the metropolitan districts, and if they do not say that the big quotas are unjust compared with places like the electorate I represent, they will do something that it will not be possible to defend on logical lines.

Mr. LATHAM (York)—[9.30]: I support the second reading of the Bill. Everyone must admit that there is a necessity for a redistribution of seats. Beverley, for instance, has 1,820 voters and the electorate alongside, York, has 3,186. Wagin has 2,683 and Katanning alongside has 3,495. Hannans electorate has 1,563 voters, and Boulder 3,987.

The Minister for Mines: Why not include Albany, which has over 4,000?

Mr. LATHAM: The Canning electorate can in the same way be compared with the electorate of Perth. It must be acknowledged that it is necessary to alter the boundaries of the electorates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We agree with that.

Mr. LATHAM: No great alteration has been made with respect to the agricultural and mining areas such as members would have us believe. As I read the Bill the whole of the votes will be pooled and divided by 46, allowing only half a vote for every vote in the metropolitan area. I do not see that there will be any decrease in the central area of the goldfields. There is, indeed, a possibility of

an increase there. When it is realised that there has been a nine per cent. decrease of electors in that area since 1911, it shows that this measure does not inflict any great hardship upon it. There has been this decrease of nine per cent., and yet there is a possibility of an additional seat being secured there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not according to the Premier's statement.

Mr. LATHAM: It looks as if the metropolitan area would get additional representation of from 18 to 25 per cent., and that the agricultural districts will only get five per cent. if they get an additional member, or 10 per cent. if they secure two additional members. There is no great privilege being extended to the agricultural areas. I see no reason for the torrent of abuse that has been hurled at the agricultural districts this evening.

Mr. A. Thomson: They are the usual electioneering tactics.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are quite safe.

Mr. LATHAM: This Bill cannot be compared with the 1911 Bill. There is no gerrymandering about this Bill. Members who went before their electors at the last election promised to support a Bill which would deal with the redistribution of seats—not on the one man one vote, and one vote one value principle. Whilst we might like to see that, it would only apply in densely populated countries such as parts of Europe, and would be quite unworkable in Western Australia. The convenience of voters must also be considered. It is easy for a man or woman to go to the polling booth and record a vote in the metropolitan area. It is quite different in the back country where we never get the same poll as we do in the metropolitan area. From that standpoint people in the country should be given additional privileges. In the metropolitan area the interests of the people are in common. Not so, however, in the agricultural districts. In the Avon electorate, for instance, we have both mining and agricultural interests. We might as well try to mix oil with water as to mix these two industries. Each is separate, and apart, and the people engaged in one do not understand the principles affecting those engaged in the other. It is impossible to get the two sections to unite under our present system and policy. The party on the cross benches is always prepared to do whatever is possible to assist the mining areas, for we realise what they have done for the State.

Mr. Heron: You did not say that when we were dealing with the Miner's Phtthisis Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: In that case it was desired to include a large number of men who were justly entitled to inclusion, but for whom there was no money with which to pay compensation. Until a method is devised of assisting these people, I will not blindly follow such a suggestion. The money which the agricultural areas have had from Loan Funds at different times has been repaid.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Not at all.

Mr. LATHAM: Most of it has been repaid, and in addition the agricultural industry has brought a considerable revenue to the State.

The Minister for Mines: The loans are charged up against the assets.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Assets indeed!!

Mr. LATHAM: If an attempt was made to realise on the balance of the securities held by the L.A.B. we should find a margin of profit.

Hon. M. F. Troy: I know of instances where there would be no profit.

Mr. LATHAM: I know that, but we should get the full money in other cases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Past results do not prove your statements.

Mr. LATHAM: If we invested money in mining we know that the securities would not be as good as they are in the agricultural areas. We realise the value the mining industry has been to the State, and it can always look to the members on the cross benches for support. It was the assistance we got from that industry that opened up the agricultural areas.

Mr. Chesson: It would be a pity if we had to depend upon the assistance we got from the farmers.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member is always conservative in his views on that question. On the occasion of the last general elections there was in West Perth a 75 per cent. poll, in East Perth 70 per cent., Subiaco, 62 per cent., Leederville 63 per cent., and Claremont 77 per cent. The Avon electorate topped the list for the country with 70 per cent. Wagin had 49 per cent., York 54 per cent., Pingelly 50 per cent., and Yilgarn a 60 per cent poll. A great deal of interest was taken in these particular elections. This shows the difficulty of the country people in recording their votes. No one would begrudge them the additional voting power they would get under this Bill. There can be no objection to this Bill. It is not a redistribution of seats Bill. It is one merely to authorise a Commission to go into the matter. Parliament will then have to say whether it agrees with the report of the Commission or not and whether it will carry out the recommendations or otherwise.

Mr. Willcock: The Commissioners will have their instructions.

Mr. LATHAM: It is impossible to satisfy everyone either in this Chamber or outside of it. If I had my way the metropolitan area would not get two additional seats. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) stated there was greater power exercised in this Chamber by the interests representing the metropolitan area than by its members. We have only to watch the galleries when anything is going on to understand how people desire to know in what direction members are voting. People have a great advantage through living in the metropolitan area, and do not require to be represented in this Chamber to the same

extent as country people do. They can always get someone to bring matters under the notice of the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have not the laws of the State to be observed by people in the metropolitan area?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. We have to consider where the finances come from. Country people from that point of view are entitled to further representation. The latest statistical return, dated the 30th September, shows the production of the State to be as follows:—From the agricultural areas close on seven millions of money came into the State in 1921. From the pastoral areas £3,886,000; from the dairy, poultry, and bee farming industry, £1,132,000; from forestry and fisheries, £1,937,000; from mining, £2,880,000, and from the metropolitan area, including manufacturing industries, £3,691,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do they not assist the others also?

Mr. LATHAM: I admit that, but the value was created for the most part outside the metropolitan area and handled through that area.

Mr. Mann: Do you see no good in the metropolitan area?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, the hon. member. I see a little good in it—good picture shows, good water supplies, a beautiful ferry service and a good tram service. I see many nice things in the city. The metropolitan people are entitled to representation in Parliament, but the people outside are those who keep the city going and upon whom it is thriving so well.

Mrs. Cowan: Perhaps the hon. member would like to sell his property and live in the city.

Mr. LATHAM: Possibly, if the hon. member would offer me some inducement. The metropolitan area, however, will get very little consideration from me while I represent a country electorate. I am prepared, however, to help anyone outside the metropolitan area, because of the power possessed by people in that area to look after their own interests.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 24 |

Majority against .. 8

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lutey |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Clydesdale | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Corbov | Mr. Munst |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Hughes | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Loughlen |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. H. K. Maley |
| Mr. Carter | Mr. Mann |
| Mrs. Cowan | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Denton | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. George | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Mullany |

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Capt. CARTER (Leederville) [9.48]: It was not my intention originally to discuss the Bill at the second reading stage, but as one who has for a long time past recognised the necessity for the introduction of such a measure, I welcome its appearance. I am prompted to speak largely by reason of the fact that I consider some of the statements made by the member for York (Mr. Latham) to be of such an extraordinary description as to call for some reply. As a representative of a metropolitan seat, which is the second largest, from the point of view of electors, in the State, having 9,545 electors at the last election, and to-day having over 10,000 electors, it astonishes me to hear the opinions expressed by members of the Opposition, and also by the member for York as to the advantages which the metropolitan residents enjoy.

Mr. Latham: Don't they enjoy them?

Capt. CARTER: We enjoy these particular benefits, if they can be described as such, but we are regarded as so important in the Leederville electorate that it takes nine of our electors to carry the weight of one elector in such places as Cue, Menzies, Coolgardie, Hannans, Kanowna, Mount Magnet, Leonora, Mt. Margaret, and Yilgarn, whose electors total 9,422.

Mr. Latham: You do not suggest I said that was right?

Capt. CARTER: No, but the hon. member said that if he had his way, the number of members representing the metropolitan areas would be reduced.

Mr. Latham: I did not say that.

Mr. McCallum: You did.

Capt. CARTER: By what process of reasoning the member for York could arrive at that conclusion, I am at a loss to understand. It was a ridiculous statement.

Mr. Latham: But I did not make that statement.

Capt. CARTER: If the hon. member did not say that, he conveyed that sense, or rather nonsense. The whole method of our electoral distribution is anomalous. I agree with the Government when they say—and with Opposition members, too, when they admit it—that a redistribution of seats is absolutely necessary. Until we can arrive at some such system as is outlined in the Bill—I do not agree that the Bill is perfect,

because I consider the metropolitan area has not been as generously treated as it should have been—the present anomalous system will continue and my electorate will contain more voters than the other nine electorates to which I have referred. Until that happens we will have misrepresentation of the State's interests in Parliament and we will continue having these anomalies. This measure cannot be regarded as a purely party matter. I resent, because I know it is not true, the statement circulated during the debate that this question has been made one of caucus control. No one has controlled my vote on the Bill and no one has extracted a promise from me on this particular measure. When it comes to the conservation of the rights of the various interests to be considered, I hope my vote will be found, as it always has been found, on the side of democratic control. I cannot conceive how members can object to the introduction of a Bill of this nature in the light of the present state of affairs. I hope the House will support the second reading of the Bill as I intend to do and at the Committee stage we will have an opportunity of discussing such theories as that put forward by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) regarding a proportional representation scheme. I have been elected to this Chamber as one objecting to the anomalous conditions regarding our electoral system and as such I must support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Harrison interjected.

Capt. CARTER: I do not stand as the exponent of that scheme of proportional representation but I am prepared to wait for the member for Forrest to give us a dissertation on that question when we reach the Committee stage later on. I desire to improve our electoral system and I agree with the member for Forrest that there are anomalies existing all over Australia, which project themselves before our gaze when we look into these matters.

Mr. Harrison: You have many advantages due to concentrated population.

Capt. CARTER: Yes, and we always pay not only for our own advantages but for the advantages enjoyed by the hon. member in Kellerberrin.

Mr. Harrison: How do you value your advantages? It costs nine times as much to get a deputation to the Government as it does in the city.

Capt. CARTER: I am not prepared to accept or reject that statement, but I believe no other than country representatives can get deputations to the Premier at any time they desire. They can even get the Premier to receive them in this building. Only on Thursday night last an influential deputation of fruitgrowers came to the House and waited on the Premier. I know Sir James is very busy, but the fact remains that very few metropolitan members can get a deputation received at such an hour at Parliament House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They take Ministers out to their districts at week ends.

The Premier: I have had deputations at midnight.

Capt. CARTER: I know the Premier has had them at all hours, particularly when annual conferences are held in the city. The other day there were 15 deputations and I believe 11 of them were probably for new country railways.

Member: They were mostly on industrial matters.

Capt. CARTER: If they were in connection with industrial matters they represent the most important problem confronting Australia at the present time. I refer to the question of industrial unrest. The very foundation of the prosperity and future of the industry with which the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) is connected rests on the firm basis of industrial peace. Where would the hon. member be if there was not industrial peace in connection with our railway system? As a matter of fact, the deputation which waited on the Premier at 9.30 p.m. on Thursday included representatives from Mount Barker, two from the Great Southern railway, and representatives from other outlying parts, and they discussed with him such an important question as codlin moth. After the Premier had been working hammer and tongs all day at his office, having sat in Parliament until 5 o'clock that morning and resumed his Parliamentary business all day and during the night, he was asked to see this deputation of country representatives in the House!

Mr. O'Loughlen: And to talk about bugs!

Capt. CARTER: I give the Premier credit for his energy, but there are so many deputations from the country districts that he cannot find time to take them all during the daytime.

Member: What has this to do with the Bill?

Capt. CARTER: It has this much to do with the Bill, that the member for York said that the metropolitan members had too much influence and that if they could not exercise that influence, vested interests in the city found the necessary punch to stir up Ministers. If that is so, it is not within my knowledge.

Mr. Latham: I did not say that.

Capt. CARTER: Now the member for York comes forward with another denial!

Mr. Latham: Your understanding is crooked.

Capt. CARTER: It may be, but the hon. member's method of expressing himself is weak.

Mr. Latham: We are not all stars like the member for Leederville.

Capt. CARTER: However that may be, his statement was not correct. The deputations which I have taken to the Premier could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know what deputations have to do with the Bill.

Capt. CARTER: When the hon. member touched the subject of the influence of metropolitan members with the Government, I wondered how far he would be allowed to go; I have merely endeavoured to refute his remarks. I do not consider we have sufficient metropolitan members. Under the new redistribution we should have at least 15 seats. I hope the speech of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party will not be taken as an indication of the friendliness of this coalition. I sit on the cross benches, not as one of that party, but with them, and I hope that, for the benefit of the State, they and the party to which I belong will work harmoniously. The speech of the hon. member to-night is not going to make for harmony.

Mr. Johnston interjected.

Capt. CARTER: I did not catch the hon. member's interjection, but I know him to be a friend of all parties. I hope the second reading will be carried.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [10.1]: I also want to enter my protest against the Bill. I am glad we have been able to get a little information from the Government side respecting it. It is a coincidence that those on the Government side can all finish their remarks on the Bill within two or three minutes, whereas we who are raising objections to the measure find in it sufficient bad features to take half an hour over our speeches. The Bill is a most important one, for it affects the representation of the people. With other speakers, I do not consider it should be a party measure at all.

Mr. Davies: Is it?

Mr. WILLCOCK: We have it that it is.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can the member for Guildford deny it?

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is a party measure, introduced by the Premier. We want to know why it was introduced. Although I do not altogether agree that all votes should be of one value under the Bill, still there should not be five different sets of representation, as provided in the Bill: metropolitan, agricultural districts, outback mining districts, central goldfields and the North-West electorates, with a different representation for each group. Nobody will say that in one State with a small population we should have five different systems of numbers. The metropolitan area and electorates within coo-ee of the seat of Government do not require the same representation as is required by others farther out; but if electorates at practically the same distance from the seat of Government and with similar conditions are to have entirely different bases of representation, I want to know what is the reason for the variation. The Bill will not affect my electorate one way or the other, and so I can claim to be unbiassed in my judgment of it. It has an underlying principle which gives an advantage to the Government in respect of representation, and apparently that is why it has been introduced. It will work out to the advantage of the Government. With the

member for Forrest, I know that any Government which attempt to tinker with the democratic idea of electorates in order to gain temporary party advantage are likely to find the weapon rebound on them. I wish to warn the Government that if it can be proved, and I think it can, that the Bill is for the purpose of giving the Government an advantage—

The Premier: But it is not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Well, I will accept the Premier's assurance, but I can find no other reason for the proposal to have five different sets of representation. If we had two systems, one for the metropolitan area and one for the outside electorates, I could understand it.

The Premier: Two would be all right, whereas three is quite wrong!

Mr. WILLCOCK: Almost every member who has spoken on the Bill has agreed that there should be some modification of representation for the metropolitan area.

Mr. Davies: Are we all in agreement in respect of the North-West?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, we have had four or five different opinions about that. The average number of electors in the North-West will be about 1,064, whereas in out-back mining districts such as the Murchison the average will be 1,880, practically 2 to 1. I see no reason for that discrepancy, nor have I heard any justification of it.

Mr. Angelo: One has a railway and the other has not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But the one without a railway has a State steamer.

Mr. Angelo: How long will she be there?

Mr. WILLCOCK: If the hon. member does his duty by his electorate she will be there for all time. The average in the central goldfields seats will be 3,400. The Premier said the agricultural and goldfields areas would have the same quota; yet in the same breath he said the central goldfields might have four or five seats, that the goldfields were declining while the agricultural industry was flourishing, and that allowances would have to be made.

The Premier: No, I said the goldfields had gone down, but I hoped they would recover.

Mr. WILLCOCK: You based your estimate of the future on the past.

Mr. Harrison: Many miners are changing their occupation.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is not the point. The point is the different basis of representation for the goldfields as against the agricultural areas. The commissioners will fix the representation for some years ahead.

The Premier: They cannot do that.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If four electorates come under their quota, there will be no necessity for alteration.

The Premier: But the House will be able to alter it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The House does not like tinkering with redistribution of seats. During the past 10 years there have been three attempts. One Government carried a most

unscrupulous measure for their own advancement, but it rebounded against them.

The Premier: You call it unscrupulous.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The people of the State at the time regarded it as unscrupulous. What other reason was there for the overwhelming majority returned against the Government?

Hon. M. F. Troy: It was an unscrupulous measure.

Mr. WILLCOCK: At all events, that was the consensus of opinion, and at the next election the people showed their estimate of the Bill by putting the Government out of office.

The Premier: At the election unscrupulous use was made of it. The 1913 Bill would have given Perth 13 seats.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would have given 13 seats, if not 14, to the goldfields.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, the quota for the goldfields was 3,006, and the 13 goldfields seats would have averaged 3,226.

Mr. WILLCOCK: This Bill was designed to give the Government a further lease of power. There are five different sets of representation and, wherever an alteration is proposed, it will be to the advantage of the Government. The North is to have a smaller quota than it had in the past and the North is represented by supporters of the Government. Had the conditions of 1911 applied, the North would have had one member less. Wherever an alteration is proposed it will work to the advantage of the Government. The North in 1911 had an average of 1,440 electors, whereas under this Bill the average number will be about 1,000. That means that where there are four members all supporting the Government, a smaller basis of representation will be required for them than for the rest of the State. If the principles of the previous Bill were applied, the North would be entitled to only three seats.

The Premier: I would refer you to the speech of Mr. Walker on the 1913 Bill.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That Bill did not become law. Possibly if it had, there would have been necessity to amend it. We cannot say what that Bill would have achieved had it become law. I am speaking of the law as it stands, and as it is proposed to amend it by this Bill. The mining centres of Kalgoorlie are represented by Labour members and for them there is to be an increase in the number of electors. A big majority of the members from this side of the House represent the outside mining area and their quota also will be considerably increased.

The Premier: They are to have very generous treatment.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am indicating how the proposals of the Premier will work out. The quota will be increased and three or four seats will be cut out. In the metropolitan area where the Government have a majority of the representation, there will be a smaller quota of electors and more members. If the law of averages applies, this will give the

Government increased support to the extent of two members. The agricultural area has a preponderance of Government supporters, and that is to have an increase of two seats as the quota there will not be increased. In every instance it will work out to the advantage of the Government, and consequently we are justified in concluding that there is something more behind this measure than a basis for redistribution of seats.

The Premier: You would say that whatever we proposed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I would not say it if it were not true.

The Premier: If we gave Perth 25 seats, you would say it was wrong.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Well, that would not be fair.

The Premier: You would say so because you do not live there.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I maintain that the outback districts are entitled to representation. If my constituents have anything of importance to urge, they have only their member through whom to voice their opinions. Take the Geraldton harbour: I was grateful for the assistance of other members on this side of the House when that question was under discussion, but if I had not brought it forward, nothing at all would have been said about it. Yet if anything is said about algae in the river or the mosquitoes at East Perth, we all know about it. The very fact that we have to come here to represent our constituents brings us into touch with the wants of the people of the metropolitan area and their disabilities and everyone is cognisant of them without any special representation. I know about the algae in the river because it is mentioned in the metropolitan Press day after day. It has become a burning question.

Mr. Angelo: A floating question.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If I were asked to judge of the relative importance of providing harbour accommodation at Geraldton and the problem of algae in the river, I should say that the provision of harbour facilities was very much more important. Yet from the trend of events, I would be safe in saying that remedial measures would be proposed regarding the algae before a harbour was provided at Geraldton. This appears to be the trend of events. While a portion of the Bill seems to be fair, one outstanding blot is the difference between the Kalgoorlie central area and the agricultural area.

The Premier: There is no difference.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There will be a difference. Although I am not a betting man, it would be safe to bet that when the Kalgoorlie quota comes out, there will be only four seats. The Premier in his speech implied as much.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is the impression I gathered from the Premier's speech.

Mr. Munzie: Kalgoorlie could not get five on the present enrolment.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If distance from the capital were taken as the main basis, there would be five, but the indications are that there will be only four, and that the quota there will be 1,000 higher. The Swan electorate presents a glaring anomaly, because a small number of electors are to get equal representation with a place 400 miles distant and 1,000 more electors. That will not be in the best interests of the country. It is not fair. I do not believe the goldfields are dying out.

The Premier: No one said they are. Take the actual number of voters.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The number in a certain portion of the goldfields will be entirely different from the number in another portion working under similar conditions. All the goldfields should be treated alike. Why this distinction? Is a person who lives in Kalgoorlie any better than one who lives at Meekatharra or Cue? There should be one underlying principle, and all the people should be entitled to similar representation. Almost every speaker has said that the metropolitan area does not deserve an absolute equality of representation.

The Premier: What should it get?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am prepared to accept something on the basis of the Bill, but there is no justification for treating Kalgoorlie differently from Cue, Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton or any other part.

The Premier: It has the same quota.

Hon. M. F. Troy: It will have 500 more.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The general trend of opinion seems to be that the goldfields are a dying industry.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They will kill the representation and the industry.

The Premier: The representation will neither make nor mar an industry.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is a more hopeful feeling and better development in the mining industry now than there has been for 10 or 15 years.

The Premier: May it be better still.

Mr. WILLCOCK: May it be very much better.

The Premier: May it be as good as ever it was.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but that is no reason why the representation should be decreased. If there is any movement in the population of the Kalgoorlie centre during the next two or three years, it will be upwards. The same applies to the outback areas. In the Mt. Magnet district there are two or three shows which in 18 months' time will be employing 200 or 300 men. There would have been a revival of mining in that locality two or three years ago, but the cost of mining requisites has been so high during the period following the war that it was not profitable to take the gold out. So soon as mining requisites come down and they are gradually coming down, there will be an increase in mining activity, particularly on the Murchison, and the population of these districts

will increase. In Youanmi we have an exceptionally good mine. It has been ruined to a certain extent by bad management, but also by the high cost of mining requisites. It is closed down on account of the high costs. If this mine were working to the extent that it could be worked, there would be in that town another 400 or 500 people. The Mt. Magnet electorate should not be tinkered with at all. The same remarks apply to Sandstone.

The Premier: I hope they will get the population and get back their representation.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister for Mines knows that the cost of mining requisites and labour have been hampering mining. Both these things have a tendency to decrease and, as soon as they approach normal, there will be a revival and an increase in population, and with it an alteration of the electoral districts will be required.

The Premier: I hope so.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Therefore it is not necessary to get down to a bedrock principle of representation. The Premier should not adopt the attitude that, because there has been a decline during the last 10 or 12 years, it is going to continue in future. We should be chary of taking away representation which it will be difficult to restore unless five or six seats require alteration. The Premier said there would be only four seats in Kalgoorlie on the basis of about 3,500 electors, whereas the average number in the agricultural constituencies would be 2,863. This Bill can be termed the "Mitchell blot on the mining industry." Sufficient evidence can be adduced to bring the mining areas into line with the agricultural areas. It is not fair to treat one set of districts differently from another set.

The Premier: The quota is the same as for the agricultural districts.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If this Bill goes through it is safe to assume only four seats will be given to Kalgoorlie. I trust members will yet desire to make them at least the equal of the agricultural constituencies.

The Premier: That will be so.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Bill does not say so. This is the greatest blot in it. We could have two bases of representation, one for the metropolitan area, and the other providing for a gradually decreasing number of electors required to send a representative to this House as they get further away from the seat of Government. I believe in proportional representation, and hope the Bill may be amended in Committee in that direction. Many advantages accrue from that system. There is no need to alter the boundaries of the electorates every four or five years. All that is necessary, when an additional member is required for a particular part of the State is to provide for his election on the basis of the number of people of his political faith within the area. Many good men stand for Parliament at different times, men of honesty, capacity and ability. They often put up for the

same seat, but only one can be elected. Under proportional representation, two such men would have an opportunity of entering this Chamber and the country would benefit accordingly. Such a system would also ensure representation of the minorities, which is not the case at present. Under the Bill a minority could capture the smaller seats comprising about 70,000 electors and could run the country, while 90,000 electors would be represented by a minority in this Chamber. Under proportional representation that could not apply. Each political aspirant would be elected upon the number of votes he could obtain. Anything more I may have to say on this question can be said during the Committee stage. The Government should see that the rolls are brought up to date before we tinker with the representation of the people in this Chamber. No serious effort has been made in this direction except by political parties.

The Premier: Enrolment is compulsory now.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but the Government have taken no steps to compel people to get on the roll. It is no use having a law if it is not enforced.

The Premier: The hachelors will not get on the roll.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is no machinery to compel the people to obey the law, such as there is in the Federal electoral offices.

The Premier: They prosecute people.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, and have other methods of bringing the rolls up to date. They utilise their postmasters, their letter carriers, and many other channels for this purpose. There is an astonishing disparity between the two rolls. In this State there is a difference of between 10,000 and 11,000.

The Premier: Which is the greater?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The State roll. The figures are respectively 178,000 and 169,000. The same individuals have a right to be put on the roll, but because of the different methods adopted there is a 5 per cent. difference throughout all the States. The State authorities do not take the same trouble as the Federal authorities do. The Commonwealth authorities instil a certain amount of fear into the minds of people, and most of them will, when changing their address from one locality to the other, see that their name is transferred from one roll to the other. People have been fined for non-observance of the Commonwealth law and therefore have some respect for it. In this State there are very few people who understand that enrolment is compulsory. Notices are posted to say that people will be fined if they do not get on the roll, but nothing is done by the State authorities to see that these conditions are complied with. The rolls should be brought up to date and there should be on the rolls only those people who are entitled to vote. They should be placed in order before we make a law based on what must be wrong data.

Mr. Marshall drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I wish to stress the necessity for bringing the rolls up to date. As regards death or removal there is no such cleansing of the State rolls as there is of the Commonwealth rolls. When we are making a law as regards representation we should do it with figures before us which are absolutely reliable. The proposal announced by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) as to the appointment of a select committee should gain the approval of the House. This should not be a party measure. Both sides should endeavour to be fair in regard to representation. The House ought to have an opportunity of getting evidence and then having submitted to it a Bill which will meet with the wishes of all the people. So far as I can judge, this is not a fair measure, but is brought in for the purpose of increasing the strength of the Government, and for that purpose only. Unlike Cæsar's wife, the Bill is not above suspicion. Before we alter the electoral law we should have a select committee representative of all sides of the House to go into the matter and collect opinions all round. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. CHESSON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following results:—

| | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 24 |

Majority against 8

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lutey |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Clydesdale | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Munzie |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Hughes | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Loughlen |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. Mann |
| Mr. Carter | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mrs. Cowan | Mr. Piesse |
| Mr. Denton | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. George | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | Mr. Mullany |

(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [10.49]: I was hopeful of being able to secure the adjournment of the debate, which I think a fair thing after a discussion lasting eight hours. How-

ever, the Government are not prepared to adjourn the debate. I oppose the measure not because it proposes to take away seats from the outer goldfields, but simply because it appoints commissioners to arrange a re-distribution of seats and then ties the hands of the commissioners. It leaves the commissioners absolutely no power whatever. The boundaries are already fixed under the Bill. The measure itself decides that there shall be group electorates. A quota is laid down for each of the groups specified, metropolitan, agricultural, goldfields central, and mining area. In the metropolitan area there are 84,000 electors and it is proposed that there shall be 14 members. The increase in population since 1911 is 30,000 and it is intended to give the metropolitan area in consequence an additional two members. It is also suggested that two extra members shall be given to the agricultural areas for 10,000 electors.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They intend to give the agricultural districts three extra members.

Mr. CHESSON: For the last 10 years, taking the whole of the agricultural group of electorates, there have been 21 members. That group comprises 55,482 electors, which works out at an average of 2,642 electors for each member. The Bill proposes to give the agricultural districts 23 members for the comparatively small increase in the number of electors per seat, while in the metropolitan area the extra two members are given an increase of 30,000 electors. If we make a comparison between the agricultural and North-Western districts, we find that the Government propose to give the North-West four seats. This means that whereas in the metropolitan area the quota works out at about 6,000 electors for each member, in the North-West there will only be 1,000 electors per member. The rolls were compiled when the Wyndham Meat Works were in operation and when shearing was in progress. I doubt if at the present time there would be found anything like 4,000 electors in the North-West. Hon. members will recognise that there is something wrong in an electoral system which gives representation on this basis. I have always held that the outback districts should be given greater representation, but I am not prepared to agree to such a disparity as that suggested in the Bill.

Mr. Mann: Will it not be possible to amend the Bill in Committee if it is desired?

Mr. CHESSON: I do not know that it will be possible. I understand that the Nationalist members held a party meeting and decided this matter.

Mr. Mann: You are jumping at conclusions.

Mr. CHESSON: If what I state is a fact, it means that the Bill becomes a party measure, and although we may talk till doomsday, we will have no chance of getting any amendment through. Although the population has decreased in the North-West since 1911, the number of seats allocated to that portion

of the State is to be retained. In the agricultural districts one elector is equal to two in the metropolitan area and six electors in the latter area are equal to one in the North-West. I am concerned regarding the Swan electorate, the boundaries of which join up with Guildford and are within a few miles of the Victoria Park tramway terminus. The Swan electorate should be included in the metropolitan area. The people in that electorate have all the facilities of the metropolitan area and are quite handy to the city. Then again, I do not see that the Murray-Wellington electorate which adjoins the South Fremantle constituency, should be treated on a basis different from the latter or given any advantages.

The Minister for Works: We do not want any advantages. We are quite satisfied.

Mr. CHESSON: The same thing applies to Northam. There are three trains a day to that centre and the facilities there are nearly equal to those obtaining in the metropolitan area. Northam should not get any more consideration than the metropolitan area. As to the mining districts, why has any distinction been made regarding the various mining areas? There are four seats in the central area in and around Kalgoorlie. The quota there is 3,413, while in the agricultural areas the quota is only 2,862.

Mr. Latham: Both should be the same according to the Bill.

Mr. CHESSON: Why should there be any distinction between the agricultural and central mining areas? Yet there is a difference of over 500 electors in the respective quotas! Kalgoorlie and the other mining districts are over 400 miles from Perth, while most of the agricultural areas are practically adjoining the metropolitan constituencies or ports, so that they have many facilities close at hand. There should be no distinction in a redistribution of seats as between the agricultural areas and the mining districts. Four seats are to be taken from the outer goldfields and two are to be given to agriculture and two to the city. In view of the increase in population, I contend that the metropolitan area, if four seats are to be taken from the mining district, is entitled to at least three additional seats. In the agricultural districts there are at present 21 seats, agriculture including viticulture, horticulture, the timber districts, and the outer ports. The population comprised is 65,000. It is proposed to give them 23 seats, which works out at 2,863 electors to each, whilst in the metropolitan area it is proposed to give only 14 seats for 84,000 electors. I am opposed to so striking a disparity. If we were to take the central and the outer mining districts and put them in one group, giving them an extra seat, it would be only right, taking into consideration their distance from the seat of Government. Kalgoorlie is 400 miles from Perth, while Meekatharra is 600 miles. Of my district, only 45 miles lies alongside the railway, and the district extends out to Lake Darlot, nearly 300

miles from Cue. The facilities there are quite inferior to some of those in the North-West. At Lake Darlot there is a fortnightly mail service, and the people have to come in to Darlot from 50 or 60 miles out to get their mails. So, too, right through the district, once we leave the railway line we have hundreds of miles to go to the outback points of settlement. Mining has pioneered every industry in the State, yet because mining is on the decline, opportunity is to be taken to reduce its Parliamentary representation. At present the outlook for mining is quite cheering, and I am hopeful that within the next 12 months we shall have on the Murchison double or treble the existing population. Many of the new shows are thoroughly genuine and will almost certainly turn out well. Therefore I say the present is an altogether inopportune time for a redistribution of seats. It is wrong to bring in a redistribution which will mean greatly reduced representation for the goldfields electorates, several of which have been hard hit by excessive railway freights. Practically all the people residing in outback districts are adults who are disfranchised. Before any redistribution of seats is made, the outback districts ought to be thoroughly canvassed in order that the voters might be given a chance to get on the rolls. As against the State, the Federal authorities, through the post offices, give improved facilities for getting on the rolls, but even those facilities are not altogether satisfactory. Every adult should be entitled to exercise the franchise wherever he may be. These people should be entitled to exercise the franchise. When a postal officer is appointed, he is disfranchised because he cannot take his own vote. A lot of these people, especially squatters, will not undertake the duty, because they would be disfranchised. No commission is required to do the work outlined in the Bill. A school-boy could go to the electoral office, ascertain the number of electors in each group and then fix the boundaries. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage it should be amended by making one quota for the whole of the goldfields. I hope, too, that the principle of proportional representation will be provided for. A select committee should be appointed to consider the whole of the matters involved, and adjust the representation on a basis which would be satisfactory to all parties in this House. A redistribution is certainly necessary. In my part of the State one seat ought to go. I shall not be concerned if it is my seat which has to go. All I am concerned about is that the representation be fixed on a fair and equitable basis. The outer goldfields and the North are entitled to extra representation, as compared with the metropolitan area, on account of their distance from the seat of Government, but when the quota in the metropolitan area is fixed at 6,000 and in the North at 1,000, the disparity is altogether too great. The proposal of 1913 to allow the North three seats would meet with

the approval of the House. If the North had three members at present, it would be receiving very fair representation, and more than it was entitled to on actual figures. The Murchison comprises goldfields and pastoral areas, and it might be thought that there is no community of interest between the two, but there is. The squatter is anxious to see the mining industry go ahead, because the presence of a community provides a ready market for his stock. I oppose the Bill because it seeks to appoint commissioners whose hands will be tied.

Mr. LAMBERT: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 24 |

Majority against .. 8

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. McCallum |
| Mr. Clydesdale | Mr. Munale |
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Heron | Mr. Willson |
| Mr. Hughes | Mr. O'Loughlen |
| Mr. Lambert | (Teller.) |
| Mr. Lutey | |

NOES.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Carter | Mr. Piesse |
| Mrs. Cowan | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Denton | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. George | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. A. Thomson |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. J. Thomson |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. H. K. Maley | (Teller.) |
| Mr. Mann | |

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. Lambert called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [11.23]: At this late hour, when members are tired and have already done a fair thing by the Government in assisting to clear the Notice Paper, it is unfair that I should have to speak upon this measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is all the thanks we get for assisting them during the session. We have not finished yet.

Mr. LAMBERT: If this is the treatment members can expect at the hands of the Government, they are in for the roughest time any Government has ever experienced in the political history of the country. I am prepared to stand here hour after hour

reading reports until Ministers complain that they are being dragged out of bed by the hair of their heads. Do they fancy they are going to keep members here to discuss an important question like this at half-past 11 at night?

The Minister for Works: Is the hon. member in order in threatening the House? Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have served you fairly all through the session.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am trying to be reasonable, but I think members who have sat here since 2.30 in the afternoon have done a fair thing by the Government.

Mr. Teesdale: The Government want to finish the session.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want to do our duty by the country, if you do not.

Mr. LAMBERT: We have already sat for very many hours to-day.

The Minister for Works: That is all right.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about going home now and finishing to-morrow?

Mr. Teesdale: It is the same thing every night.

Mr. LAMBERT: In common decency the Government should acknowledge their obligations to members. We have extended to the Government more than the ordinary amount of consideration in facilitating the business of the House, and it ill-becomes them to ride roughshod over us in this manner. If this is an indication of what we may expect within the next week or so, I will be prepared to talk on this subject as long as I can stand on my feet. This Bill opens up a great scope for discussion. In ordinary circumstances political ethics and decency would call for an impartial discussion upon the Bill, having regard to the interests involved. Because the Government choose to give the House a rough outline of a measure involving the redistribution of the electoral seats, at the tail end of the session, and have already called upon members to discuss it from half-past two this afternoon until this late hour, members of the Opposition would not be showing the pluck of an ordinary lizard if they allowed themselves to be overridden. I will not stand it.

Mr. Teesdale: I rise to a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is it?

Mr. LAMBERT: What is the point of order? The hon. member is a blue-tongued lizard.

Mr. Teesdale: Apparently the hon. member has no conception of what he is saying.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. Teesdale: The hon. member has referred to members as lizards. There are members who could use terms in connection with the hon. member, but are quite satisfied to allow him the monopoly of insults like that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did the hon. member say that members were lizards? If he used that expression, as the member for Roebourne indicates, he has said something that is unparliamentary.

Mr. LAMBERT: Certainly not; I would not insult the lizard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member should keep to the point.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think we have been a lot of lizards to serve you as we have done, when we receive this sort of treatment.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was endeavouring to compare the attitude we have adopted towards the Government and the attitude they have adopted towards us, and was saying that we had not the pluck of a lizard if we stood it. I think that if we did not resent that, we should not be showing the spirit or pluck of a lizard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is quite Parliamentary.

Mr. LAMBERT: I would not for one moment liken the member for Roebourne to a lizard, for the sake of the lizard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not proper.

Mr. LAMBERT: Then I will say, for the sake of the hon. member. Much has been said as to the necessity for redistributing the electoral seats throughout the State. That necessity is unfortunately apparent. But it is not one-fiftieth part as apparent as is the lack of policy which is responsible for the depopulation of our goldfields areas.

Mr. Lutey: I draw attention to the state of the House. If the Government are brutal enough to keep us here, they should remain in their seats.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. LAMBERT: Let us analyse the factors which led up to the unequal distribution of the people of Western Australia during the past few years. When the call to arms came, there was no class of people in the State who responded more readily than did the virile youth of the goldfields, who felt they had an obligation to their country. During the time that the war was waged, many factors contributed to the downward tendency of mining in Western Australia. Two of those factors were the question of labour—much of which was, unfortunately, inefficient—and the inflated cost of materials essential to mining. This is not a Bill of a subordinate nature, but one which strikes at the root of constitutional government. Therefore, it is false policy to require that the second reading speeches should be delivered in one or two nights. The Premier knows the bitter feeling which has been engendered in the past by such tactics. Having regard to that recollection, and in view of the generous attitude which the Opposition have always adopted towards the hon. gentleman, a reasonable attitude might be adopted by him towards us, even if he has a majority. To-morrow the position may be different. There always is a morrow; and when that morrow comes we shall probably deal out the same consideration which we are receiving now in being asked to debate so important a measure at mid-

night. In the Committee stage the Bill will call for analytical criticism. Hon. members should at least have an opportunity of expressing themselves in their own way on the second reading of the Bill. Many factors have led up to the shifting of the population of Western Australia during the past few years.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The member for Roebourne does not care so long as he has his 246 electors.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that I can find fault with that hon. member's attitude towards the Bill. It has conceded to him a generous measure of recognition in common with the other members representing North-West constituencies.

Hon. M. F. Troy: That is the price of his support.

Mr. LAMBERT: If by some process we can arrive at a reasonable basis of representation in this Chamber, giving justice to the various sections of the community whose interests have to be considered, I will not cavil at it, even if the Coolgardie seat has to disappear. In that event, I will be prepared to enter into the rough and tumble of another constituency, like Northam.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Or Roebourne.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that I would care to represent that electorate. I prefer to have more electors.

Mr. Teesdale: I will take on the member for Mt. Magnet at any time he likes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members to address the Chair.

Mr. LAMBERT: In considering the conditions which have led up to the distribution of population in Western Australia as we find it to-day, it has to be recognised that many of the goldfields areas, particularly in the outer districts, have been depopulated during recent years. Hon. members must realise that that position is largely due in the first instance to the unfortunate war. Closely following upon the war and the depopulating of those areas came that generous enforced policy of the Government, in imposing excessive railway freights and water charges which had to be paid by the people who remained!

The Premier: Don't you think we had to meet the increased cost of running the railways?

Mr. LAMBERT: That is true.

Mr. Chesson: But the increases crippled the mining industry.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have admitted that it was a policy practically forced on the Government, and surely I could not be more generous in my attitude towards them when I say that it is possible that is as far as their foresight carried them. That false policy, however, as with all other such policies, has proved unfortunate for Western Australia. Yet that process is continuing to-day, notwithstanding that there are better prospects ahead of the gold mining industry to-day than has been the case for many years past.

The Premier: I believe that is quite true.

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Premier believes that statement to be true, he must believe that we are pursuing a policy which is inimical to the best interests of the mining industry in the outer portions of the State. This practice of levying increased railway rates and water charges is suicidal.

The Premier: We have not increased the water charges.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not wish to go into that question fully on an Electoral Bill.

The Premier: This is not a water Bill anyhow.

Mr. LAMBERT: This policy has been adopted by Governments in power since 1914 and it has led to the depopulating of many mining areas. The Government's efforts to square the ledger by levying these increased charges, have been detrimental to the industry.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The Government's idea has been to heap on additional charges.

The Premier: Surely you don't object to our paying increased wages on the railways?

Mr. LAMBERT: This is not an Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, so I cannot discuss that matter now. For the moment I am not concerned about railway matters, but rather the effect of the increased railway charges on the prosperity of Western Australia.

Mr. Teesdale: Those increased charges did not close the mines. Overhead costs did it more than the question of railway freights. You cannot blame the railway freights altogether for that position.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not blaming the present Administration alone. If Administrations from 1914 onwards had seized the opportunity for lessening the burdens on the mining industry, much good would have accrued to the State. When the war concluded, our unfortunate lads returned to Australia to be absorbed in the economic life. While I commend the Government on the policy which allowed them to spend millions of money in agricultural areas, I should like to know what they have done for mining.

The Premier: What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr. LAMBERT: I am reviewing the factors which led up to the shifting of population, and inquiring whether, after some years of lavish expenditure in repopulating the mining areas to people the agricultural areas, you are justified in bringing down this Bill. When the soldiers were returning from the Front, the policy of the Government was to absorb them into the economic life, and in pursuance of that policy they lavished millions of pounds in settling the agricultural areas. Every young fellow who enlisted from the goldfields was offered a farm on his return, and many of them accepted the offer. The mining industry, in a little over a quarter of a century, has produced 145 million pounds sterling. In the language of my friend the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) that will take some making up in spring onions. To-day we find that hon. member living cheek-by-jowl with

those gentlemen of the Country Party, whom he dubs the spring onion crowd, notwithstanding that he is on the friendliest possible terms with them. If one had regard for their plaintive cry, one would think the farmers were being robbed by everybody, notwithstanding which they contribute everything to the wealth of the country. The member for York (Mr. Latham) declares that virtually no production is taking place other than that in those areas represented by him and his colleagues. The member for Roebourne should show a little fair play and suggest that other interests and other constituencies equally deserving should receive consideration at the hands of the Government.

Mr. Teesdale: I could wish they would cut out more seats if it would mean less talking.

Mr. LAMBERT: In the North there will be slightly over 1,000 electors to each district with an effective voting strength of about 25 per cent.

Mr. Teesdale: No, 55 per cent.

Mr. LAMBERT: The local popularity of the member for Roebourne was displayed at the last general election, when that member was returned by 246 votes. The other two candidates lost their deposits, because the hon. member was able to get the whole of the electors into a decent-sized charabanc and take them to the polling booth, so that no electors were left for the other chaps.

[Mr Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. Chesson: Most of them cast postal votes as soon as the writs come out.

Mr. LAMBERT: The members for Kimberley, Gascoyne and Pilbara find that the busiest period of their lives is getting postal votes prior to an election.

Mr. Teesdale: You get up a sweat at election time in order to get votes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should we keep a House for the Government?

Mr. LAMBERT: If the figures of the Electoral Department could be taken as an indication of the enrolment, we might subject them to a critical analysis, but though compulsory enrolment has been the law for a couple of years, I have not heard of one prosecution. There are dozens of prosecutions under the Federal Act, but the State Government have shown a wicked disregard for this statute. If it were enforced, it would probably be found that there were hundreds of eligible voters not on the roll. If a proper canvass were made in my district and the compulsory enrolment provision enforced, I believe the roll strength could be increased by 25 per cent. If a stranger happened to stray into the Kimberley district, the member for the district would learn of it at once by wireless.

The Premier: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. LAMBERT: Even if the peregrinating kangaroo entered the Kimberley area—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Kangaroos have not votes.

Mr. LAMBERT: But they are as much deserving of votes as many of the constituents

to whom I am referring. Let me take as an illustration the poor wage slave who may wander into Kimberley; a Mulga wire immediately reaches the member for Kimberley announcing the fact. I regret that the Government have not arrived at a definite policy regarding a redistribution. It is all very well to presume to appoint commissioners to lay down a quota and arrange preliminaries, but if the Government consider that the movement of population is a permanent one, they should have a policy to meet the circumstances. If the Premier would withdraw the Bill, he could introduce a short measure containing some element of political decency. He could state it was his belief that the goldfields were played out, that the great mining areas had shrunk and were likely to continue to shrink, and that they were depopulated to such an extent that they should lose five seats. He could also admit that the cockies were being bolstered up by the I.A.B. to the extent of nearly two million pounds of the State's funds, and that as a consequence they were growing in population. This is the spring onion crowd. It is not for the Premier to rob the goldfields of their representation in this Chamber, but to more closely analyse the facts which are to lead up to that. If the Premier has a policy in connection with the redistribution of seats he should not camouflage it under this Bill. He should not first go to his intermittent and shifty supporters, who comprise the remnants of the political life of this country, and consult them as to what they think is required to give better representation in this Chamber. He should state definitely, "It is my considered opinion that the mining areas of the State have petered out."

The Premier: I should say nothing of the sort.

Mr. LAMBERT: On account of the war the population of the goldfields has gone down, and also because the Government will not give them a shilling. Everything is going to the spring onion crowd, as my hon. friend opposite says.

Mr. Teesdale: I will never confide in you again.

Mr. LAMBERT: These are not my words. The hon. member calls them "the political allies of the Government, the spring onion party."

Mr. Johnston: We will see about this coalition if that is the way they are talking about us.

Mr. LAMBERT: No doubt members of the cross benches will be forced to review that coalition the moment they find it is no further use to them. They have followed that line of action in the Federal arena, and I think they will continue to do so until an outraged public puts them out of the political life of the country. In 1913 Coolgardie had a voting strength of 3,000. To-day it is about half that number.

The Minister for Works: A quarter.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister is thinking of his own electorate. At the present

juncture we should not inform the outside world that the mineral wealth of the State is reduced to such an extent as to justify Parliament in cutting down the representation of the goldfields by one-third. In two decades the goldmining industry has contributed a little over 145 million pounds to the State. It enabled Western Australia to emerge from a penal settlement into a proud position amongst the States of this mighty Commonwealth. Surely the goldfields constituents deserve more than this at the hands of the Government. Ministers must have some policy, as they have in connection with the farming districts. I admit the Government are doing their best to open up the great bush lands of the State. I do not believe, however, they have shown sufficient enterprise or given enough assistance in the direction of opening up the hidden mineral wealth of the State. Metropolitan members who have found fault with the Bill must consider how it will affect them. I again express regret at being forced to speak at this late hour.

The Minister for Works: No one has forced you to do it.

Mr. Lutey: We should not be asked to sit here until this hour.

Mr. LAMBERT: During the session we have done a great deal to help the Government, who in turn should consider our personal feelings. I hope other members will not be called upon to speak at so late an hour on a measure like this. If no consideration is to be extended to us, let us know it immediately, and we shall shape our policy accordingly. If that policy should be different from the one we have pursued to date, this will be a continuous session up to next Christmas.

The Minister for Works: That is another threat.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not a threat, but a statement of fact. The Minister for Works will find that if he gets me on my feet here at midnight, under the necessity of speaking for three or four hours—

The ACTING SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to keep to the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: Again I appeal to the Government, in all fairness, not to expect too much from us. It would be well if the Government were to review the factors which have caused the shifting of population, instead of attempting to take advantage of the temporary shift from the mining to the agricultural area. I do not know that members on the cross benches can view with much comfort a measure for redistribution of seats. The same fate they met under the present Federal electoral system awaits them at the next State election. The fact of their seeking to take advantage of their temporary numerical strength here, while supporting a composite Ministry, will be remembered. Probably it will never be expressed in figures what that composite Ministry has cost the country.

The ACTING SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the Bill, Mr. Lambert. I must ask you to keep to the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: I make that reference only by way of leading up to the fact that it is dangerous for a prominent political party to seek by unfair means to shape legislation, particularly legislation having for its object the permanent subordination of another political party. In the North-West the Government have four supporters, and this Bill proposes to grant those four supporters political immunity. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) will be able to go on representing his 1,200 electors, and being returned by 700 odd of them, to the end of time.

Mr. Teesdale: He has to take his chance.

Mr. LAMBERT: It will be Buckley's chance next time. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), with his effective voting strength of 264—

Mr. Teesdale: A lot of them are your people.

Mr. LAMBERT: By the time the effects of this Bill are properly realised, our people will be galvanised into such political action as previously did honour to the constituency of Roebourne by enabling it to return a Labour member.

Mr. Teesdale: That was the only lapse they made and that was when I was away. I jerked him out quickly when I came back, and you know that too.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member was not in this Chamber at the time. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) is another Government supporter and a prominent member of the Country Party. He too, has been granted political immunity. Is it a coincidence that all these members are Government supporters, whilst in the case of the majority of the goldfields electorates, their representatives are members of the Opposition? It is regrettable that the Government have not seen fit to formulate a policy regarding the alteration of the electoral boundaries. I again appeal to the Premier to give this Bill greater consideration. It has been stated, rightly or wrongly, that the Opposition of to-day have assisted the Premier to such an extent that had that assistance been withdrawn at times, the far-reaching effects could hardly be realised. Had we done so, we would have been true to our sound policy, so far as Western Australia itself is concerned. However, we have little to gain from the present Administration. We are fully in accord with the Premier's policy of land settlement and, notwithstanding the vagaries of what may be called the "spring-onion crowd," we are not going to allow the administration of this country's affairs to be tampered with by an executive sitting in St. George's-terrace, or any "spring-onion group" who may attempt to dictate to the Government what they shall do. Whilst the Ministers in charge of the administration of the affairs of this State are true to that line

of policy, I believe that, even at a reasonable political sacrifice, the Opposition will support them. If the Premier were to bring down tomorrow a Redistribution of Seats Bill embracing the policy of the Mitchell Government, if it were fair and equitable, giving due consideration to distance from the centres of population, community of interests and so forth, the Opposition would embrace heartily the opportunity to—

Mr. Teesdale: Fire it out.

Mr. LAMBERT: To vote for the measure.

On motion by Minister for Agriculture debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 12.35 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 24th January, 1923.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, PITHARA EASTWARDS.

Hon. J. MILLS asked the Minister for Education: The Railway Advisory Board having reported favourably upon a proposed railway from Pithara eastwards, will the Government, during the next session of Parliament, introduce a Bill authorising the construction of the first section of this line?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The question will receive consideration.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, ATTENDANTS.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN asked the Minister for Education: Referring to the answers given to the questions asked by me on the 13th December last, will the Minister explain