

# Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 28th November, 1913.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## PAPER PRESENTED.

By Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): By-laws of the Wagin Local Board of Health.

## QUESTION — LAND SUBDIVISION IN METROPOLITAN AREA.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that several landowners in the metropolitan area are subdividing their blocks into small areas, thereby introducing slums into our bright and progressive State? 2, Will he immediately take the necessary action to stop such undesirable conditions, and thus prevent the repetition of slum areas such as exist in Melbourne and Sydney?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Premier) replied: 1, No. All plans have to be approved by the municipality or roads board in which the land is situate before they can be accepted by the Titles Office. After subdivision, any proprietor can sell portion of a subdivision, but no building can be erected without consent under the building regulations. One instance is known to the Government where the houses in a terrace built some years ago are being sold separately, but no action can be taken to stop the same, as permission to build was given by the local authority at the time. 2, Action to prevent subdivisions below a reasonable size is automatic as shown above and registration cannot take place except with the approval of the local authorities.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Flinders Bay—Margaret River Railway Purchase (introduced by the Minister for Works).

2, Permanent Reserves Rededication (introduced by the Minister for Works, for the Minister for Lands).

## BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: This is a short amending Bill, and I regret that owing to pressure of other business I was unable to bring forward a consolidating measure, because there have been several amendments made since the principal Act was passed in 1882. The amendments proposed in this Bill are really found to be necessary owing to omissions from previous measures, and for the purpose of making clearer some of the language. We are also making improvements in the direction of bringing the Act into line with the Imperial Act and the Acts in existence in other parts of the Commonwealth. I will admit at once that there are one or two principles in this Bill which are unknown elsewhere, but which, I consider, are fair, just, and reasonable. If we institute a stamp duty that duty should be imposed on all transacted business of a similar nature, but under existing conditions such is not the case, and I will deal with those as I proceed. It will be noticed that we have even gone to the extent of providing for an amendment of the interpretation clause, as it affects "marketable security." The interpretation is somewhat defective and at the request of the Crown Law authorities we are proposing this amendment. It is required, for example, where the Act makes provision for the payment of *ad valorem* duty on the consideration for the sale of land, mines, etc., paid by shares in companies, etcetera. Section 45 is also amended to correspond with the provisions of the Imperial Act, because unfortunately the words to be inserted were omitted from a previous amending measure. It is not considered that the

omission of the words would necessarily limit the meaning of the term "property" but the reason why the words should be inserted is that their omission leaves the inference that the term "property" in our Act is not so wide as in the Imperial Act, and, therefore, might give rise to questions which, in reality, have no foundation. It is proposed to insert these words accordingly, to bring the section into line with the Imperial and Queensland Acts and other Stamp Acts. The amendment of Section 53 is considered necessary because of a previous omission through a misprint. It is thought that this was omitted through a misprint because an amendment previously made in the Stamp Act was to make it conform to the provisions of the Imperial Act, but by some means they overlooked one amendment and made the amount sixpence when it should have read 2s. 6d. I will admit that 6d. is the same amount as the Imperial Act provides for, but at the same time in the other provisions the duty on agreements is 2s. 6d., as compared with the Imperial duty of 6d., and therefore it is considered that a misprint was made. The provision in this Bill regarding the mode of calculating *ad valorem* duty in certain cases is taken from the Imperial Act, and was apparently omitted from the Stamp Act of 1882 by an inadvertence. Clause 7 deals with certain contracts which will be chargeable as conveyances on sale. This is quite new so far as our own law is concerned, but it is in the Imperial Act, is the law in Queensland, and I believe has also been operating in New Zealand for some time. Under the present law, in order to prevent an evasion of duty on leases by the lessor and lessee remaining satisfied by an agreement for a lease, it was enacted by the Imperial Act and also by our Stamp Act of 1882, that the *ad valorem* lease duty shall be collected on the agreement for the lease and the agreement duty of 2s. 6d. shall be collected on the lease instrument when it comes to be executed. We have an analogous provision in the case of agreements for the sale of mines, going concerns, etcetera, to companies, where the

consideration is payable partly in shares. These agreements are charged with *ad valorem* duty on the purchase consideration and the subsequent deed of transfer bears the fixed deed duty of 10s. The present provision extends the principle to the sale generally of property other than land, goods, etcetera, for which other provision is made in the principal Act. It frequently happens that no other deed of transfer or assignment is found necessary than the agreement itself, with the result that in many transactions *ad valorem* duty is not payable, although there has been a duly completed sale and the property is effectually passed to the purchaser. The Imperial Act provides that in these cases the contract shall be charged with duty as a conveyance on sale. This has been the law in New Zealand for a considerable time, and was adopted in Queensland lately. That is one of the grounds for my making the statement that transactions of a similar nature, having the same result, should pay exactly the same stamp duty. Under those conditions where a transfer actually takes place on a formal agreement, it frequently happens that proper stamp duty is avoided, not illegally, but because the Act does not provide for it being paid. One of the smallest clauses in the Bill, Clause 8, is one of the most important, for it deals with instruments held in escrow. Where a conveyance or transfer of property is not immediately handed over to the transferee, or assignee, but is delivered into the hands of a third person to be held by him until some condition is fulfilled, as, for instance, the payment of the purchase money, and then delivered to the purchaser or assignee, it is termed an "escrow," that is a writing that is not completed as a deed by delivery. It does not become an operative instrument as a deed duly delivered until the condition is fulfilled. Application is frequently made for leave to stamp documents a considerable time after their signature on the ground that they have been held in escrow, in other words, that they have been held on behalf of the vendor until the purchase money was fully paid. Personally I cannot see why the Treasury should be kept out of its money when it

suits the convenience of parties to allow the registration of documents to be delayed, and therefore it is proposed that for the purpose of stamp duty a document held in escrow shall be deemed to be fully executed and delivered, and therefore liable to stamp duty.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Supposing in the case of property it does not eventually change hands.

The PREMIER: If for any reason the transaction does not eventuate so that the document is not required, all the parties have to do is to make application to the Treasury for the refund of the duty under the existing provisions of the principal Act. There are certain firms dealing in large estates; they cut them up and sell the land on terms of, say, ten years. Supposing they dispose of £10,000 worth of land, they would receive each year about £1,000 in payments, but the State receives nothing by way of stamp duty until the ten years has expired.

Mr. McDowall: You get half a crown on the contract?

The PREMIER: Yes, but under this Bill such firms from the point of view of stamp duty will have to pay as though the transaction was completed. The existing arrangement is an awful nuisance. The question of escrow causes great trouble and expense. While these instruments will still continue to be held in escrow until the transfer has been properly complied with, from the point of view of stamp duty these documents must be stamped there and then. In some cases it is a matter of ten years after the agreement is signed before the stamp duty is paid, and we have been losing a considerable sum of money in consequence. Frequently the actual agreement is never used; the transfer has not taken place, but a second escrow is made on the transfer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I cannot see the provision for a refund.

The PREMIER: That is provided in the principal Act. All that we are providing under this clause is that where stamp duty is required notwithstanding that the instrument is held in escrow the stamp duty shall be paid, and in the event of the transaction not being com-

pleted a claim may be made on the Treasury and a refund will be granted. It is not fair to the general public that they should lose the money represented by a stamp tax during a period of ten and perhaps even twenty years. Quite a number of sales take place on a basis of ten years, and we do not get the stamp duty during that period.

Mr. McDowall: They usually have promissory notes, so that you are not altogether without stamp duty.

The PREMIER: That is quite apart from the question of stamp duty on deeds of assignment or anything of that sort. That is duty for the use of the promissory note. There are duplications in almost every direction, but we cannot avoid them. The duty on a promissory note has nothing to do with the stamping of an agreement of this nature. In many cases agreements are made and are not stamped, and never would be stamped unless they happened to be required in a court of law. Consequently we are losing revenue at a tremendous rate. In comparison with the business transacted in connection with the transfer of property the returns in this State do not compare at all favourably with those in other parts where a similar stamp duty is charged, and the reason is that people here do not stamp these documents unless they are actually required in a court of law. We are providing in Clause 9 a penalty for neglecting to stamp instruments. An hon. member of the Opposition directed my attention to the fact that while we have provision that all receipts for money in excess of £2 shall bear stamps, it is not provided that receipts shall be given for all payments exceeding £2. Under prevailing conditions where nearly everyone transacts business by cheque through a bank, very few receipts pass.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the shops?

The PREMIER: That is a point I am coming to. In the stores receipts are given—

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, not when you pay cash.

The PREMIER: If a man pays cash over the counter he gets a receipt but not stamped.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You do not get a receipt.

The PREMIER: If a man pays on a fortnightly or monthly basis he gets a receipt and it is stamped.

Mr. George: If you go to any of the big stores and pay over £2 they will give you a stamped receipt.

The PREMIER: What I hold is that in regard to every transaction when payment is made of an amount exceeding £2 a receipt should be given and it should be stamped. It should be compulsory to give a receipt in order that the stamp duty should be paid. Under existing conditions it is the small man who has to pay the stamp duty when paying for his food and clothing and other requirements. The stamp duty is passed on; it is deducted from the value of his goods, but where a big transaction takes place and is met by cheque a signature on the butt of the cheque is accepted and no stamp is affixed. Quite a number of people do not look for a receipt when they pay by cheque. They are satisfied that they can trace the payment, and if the matter went to the court a receipt stamped or unstamped is *prima facie* though not definite evidence of payment.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I should rely on it.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the same applies to a cheque. If a person claims payment and it is proved through tracing a cheque that he has already received payment, no receipt is required to satisfy the court.

Mr. Taylor: The cheque would have to be of the same amount as the account rendered.

The PREMIER: Yes. Large sums are paid by cheque and no stamp duty is paid in respect to them. Provision is made in this Bill that while it is necessary to stamp a receipt it will also be necessary to give a receipt, and for failure to do so a penalty is provided. Both parties will be held responsible; if a receipt is given, the giver and the receiver alike are held liable if it is not stamped. If I pay over £2

and accept a receipt which is not stamped I am as much liable as the person who gives the unstamped receipt.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You would not force him to have a receipt.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Supposing I am settling up a little wager with you, a £5 note, I would not want a receipt.

The PREMIER: It would not be possible to sue to recover a wager.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then supposing I buy some timber.

The PREMIER: Any transaction for which it is possible to sue for the recovery of payment in a court of law should call for a receipt, and if a receipt is given it should bear a stamp.

Mr. George: There are many transactions in the back blocks where people have neither pens, ink, nor stamps.

The PREMIER: If unstamped receipts are given for amounts exceeding £2 we take action wherever it is possible to do so, but it is very hard to trace such cases. However, I am certain that no court would inflict a penalty if the conditions were as stated by the hon. member. Where there is no intention to avoid payment, the court would not inflict a penalty.

Mr. George: Sometimes they use postage stamps.

The PREMIER: The point I wish to make is that the man who is able to transact his business through a bank is able to avoid the payment of stamp duty, and the person who transacts his business by payment in gold or other currency has to pay the stamp duty. I contend that similar transactions should be charged with the same amount of stamp duty.

Mr. George: In regard to many transactions there is no chance of getting stamps.

The PREMIER: Clause 10 is an amendment of Section 73 of the principal Act, and renders it an offence to receive the payment of an amount where a receipt would be liable to duty without giving or tendering to the person who makes the payment a duly stamped receipt. Clause 11 amends the schedule to the Stamp Act, 1905, whereby duties are prescribed. Collateral mortgages which at present are

exempt from duty will be liable to a duty of 6d. per cent., that is to say, one-fifth of the duty on a primary security. Transfers of collateral securities which are at present exempt will bear a similar duty of 6d. per cent. or one-half of the duty payable on the transfer of a primary security. This amendment is in accordance with the Imperial stamp law. It is proposed to charge a duty ranging from one-halfpenny to sixpence on a sliding scale.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where is the half-penny set out?

The PREMIER: I should have stated one penny.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that for ordinary receipts?

The PREMIER: Yes, that is shown in Clause 7. Instead of being one penny for any sum exceeding £2 the stamp duty will now be on a sliding scale of from one penny up to sixpence. It is proposed to delete from the exemption "receipt given for the payment of money by or for the use of or from His Majesty" the words "or from." There is no reason why contractors, vendors, and other persons who are in receipt of money from the Government should not duly stamp their receipts. Under the existing law in regard to payments made by the Government to contractors and others no stamp duty is necessary. I cannot see any reason why these people should be exempted when they receive payment from the Government any more than when they receive payment from a private individual.

Mr. Monger: How much do you reckon this will bring in per annum?

The PREMIER: I imagine about £5,000. It may amount to more when the measure is in full operation, but it will take some time before it becomes generally understood that receipts are necessary. When the law is in full operation I believe that amount will be exceeded. I do not know how the words "or from" came into our Stamp Act exempting such receipts, and I am not aware that it applies anywhere else except in the case of salaries and wages, etc., of public servants and employees. Such exemption is usually found in Stamp Acts, and it is proposed in making the amendment now

suggested to allow an exemption to that extent together with receipts for money withdrawn from the Savings Bank. The schedule of stamp duties proposed to be amended will be found in the volume of statutes for 1905, mortgages being at page 109 and receipts at page 111. I have explained the whole of the provisions of the Bill, except that another schedule has been added which provides that the person shall be liable to a penalty if the instruments are not properly stamped. The penalties are set out and hon. members can read them for themselves. It is not the amount so much that will be collected under this Bill as the fact that it is a fair method. As a matter of fact I know that most people, when they are paying off £100, say, "Come along and have a drink," and they spend a shilling, and I think that if a man can pay a shilling for the purpose of a drink in connection with a transaction like this, he can pay 6d. to give legality to the document.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER AGREEMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: The Bill that I now present to the Chamber has been drawn up for the purpose of ratifying an agreement made between the Government and the mayor and councillors of the City of Perth, relating to electric light and power. The Bill itself contains only two clauses, one being the short title, and the other clause is to ratify the agreement, but of course the real substance of the measure is comprised in the schedule itself. May I first of all explain that the necessity for having brought this matter before the House lies in the fact that after the purchase of the Perth city trams by the Government, it was found necessary to make provision for further electric current. We called to our assistance the firm of Messrs. Merz and McLellan, members of that firm then being in Australia,

for the purpose of advising the Victorian Government. They strongly advised us that, owing to the fact that the Perth City Council, who had certain rights conferred on them, being in much the same position in the matter of requiring further electrical current, one power station should be erected to supply the requirements of the Government and the city council. The Perth Gas Company's Act, 1886, conferred on the company the right (but not the exclusive right) to supply gas within the city of Perth, and at any place within a radius of five miles from the General Post Office, Perth. The company's private Act of 1893 extended the powers and privileges of the company to the supply of electricity for light and motive power. These Acts conferred on the Perth City Council the option to purchase the company's works and undertaking, which option was exercised. By the Act No. 2 of 1911 all rights and powers conferred by the above-mentioned Acts on the company were vested in the Perth City Council. The city council therefore acquired all the works and plant of the company with the right to supply gas and electricity within a radius of five miles from the Post Office. That is the right that was conferred upon them by the Act we passed in 1911. The last-mentioned Act, however, the Act which conferred these powers on the City Council to supply gas and electricity within five miles of the Post Office, does not affect the right of local authorities under the Municipalities Act, 1906, to establish lighting works within their own districts, notwithstanding that their own districts may be wholly or partly within the five mile radius, whether for municipal purposes or under the powers conferred by the Act No. 12 of 1912 for sale to private consumers. What I want hon. members to understand is this, that the Act which gave the rights to the Perth Gas Company to supply gas in the first instance was amended, and gave them the right to supply electricity on exactly the same basis that they were previously entitled to supply gas, that is within a five mile radius of the Perth Post Office. Notwithstanding the fact that other local au-

thorities might provide for their own purposes or sell within their own boundaries electric light, the Perth Gas Company could, if they so desired, extend their mains and sell within the boundaries of those local authorities. The measure gave them the right to go anywhere within five miles of the Perth Post Office, and sell current, but it did not give them a monopoly, except as against any other company. It did not affect the right of the municipality or the other local governing bodies to provide themselves with plant to supply their own purposes, or for sale within their own boundaries. We arrived at the position that on the advice of Messrs. Merz and McLellan, who, I may say, are recognised to-day as leading advisers in the question of electric power stations, we conferred with the city council and the city council agreed that it would be to the advantage of both the Government and themselves if we were to act together in this matter, and erect one power station which would supply the current for all purposes, so long as we could arrive at a basis which would be fair to both the city council and the Government. I claim that the agreement which we have submitted to Parliament for ratification is fair to both, and I want hon. members, when considering the agreement, to remember that the city council by agreeing to scrap their existing plant, which cost them a huge sum of money, and to come in with the Government, will not alone assist themselves, but will likewise assist the Government. In the first place it was estimated that, to build a station which would provide the current necessary, for the purpose of the trams alone, would cost us approximately £150,000. On the other hand, for the Perth City Council to erect a station which would provide the current they would require, based on a period of five years from the date we took over the trams, and not for future extensions within the metropolitan area, would cost the city council about £130,000, making in all £280,000 for the two plants operating in the same area, supplying current in the one instance for trams, and in the other for electric light.

Under the circumstances, it would be easily seen from the point of view of the capital expenditure in the first instance, we could, by entering into an agreement such as is now before the House, save from £40,000 to £50,000, and produce exactly the same current. But that is not where the whole economy comes in. Hon. members ought to consider the cost which would be involved operating two stations instead of one. It would mean duplication of management and men employed, as well as duplication of machinery. With a single station there would be a saving far and above that in relation to the cost of the machinery that would be necessary to generate the plant required for all purposes. It is considered that for tramway and electric lighting purposes it would be more economical to have one power station and supply it per unit than it would be to have each of these smaller stations. It is proved conclusively now that the larger the station up to a certain point, the cheaper is the cost of production. Small plants cannot compete with big plants nowadays. The result is that where companies get huge rights over a big area to enable them to put in big plants, they completely wipe out companies having smaller plants, so it was shown to us quite conclusively that by arranging with the city council to have one station only, we could generate for ourselves much cheaper than if we merely had a station of our own for the purpose of the tramways. I think we to-day as a Government consume in our Government offices about 18 per cent. of the total current produced by the Perth City Council. It will be seen by this agreement that while we are supplying the city council at a maximum of three farthings a unit, that is, at a cost not to exceed three farthings a unit, a portion of this agreement provides that they shall not sell to us at more than 100 per cent. of the price payable by the council to the Government for current delivered at high tension, so the most we pay in future for current to the city council will be  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit, whereas to-day I think we are paying  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d.

Then about the only other question which will influence members is that as to how we propose to treat the other local governing bodies. Naturally, they are much concerned on the question.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Are they not concerned in this agreement ?

The PREMIER : They have nothing to do with it.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Take Subiaco, for instance; they can be knocked out completely. How would you deal with them ?

The PREMIER : All we have done in this agreement is to agree to confer to the city council rights previously conferred on them by Parliament. If the city council can supply the adjoining municipalities at a cheaper rate than the latter can produce current, those municipalities, of course would be foolish to hang on to their own plants. The hon. member will appreciate the fact that the city council are called upon to carry their share of the burden by having to pay interest and sinking fund charges on the capital cost of the power station, whereas the other councils will have nothing to do with that.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Are you safeguarding the other councils in any way ?

The PREMIER : Another matter is that the city council has purchased rights which Parliament conferred on them in 1911, in connection with the Gas Company, and, naturally, we are not prepared to take away what was then given. It might be as well, perhaps, if I were to read the principal points in the agreement. The first clause of the agreement sets out that the Government shall provide and direct—

(a.) A power station suitable for supplying the requirements of both the Government and the corporation, with a generating plant of an initial capacity of 9,000 kilowatts, suitable provision being made for spare parts and accessories, and for future extensions.

As a matter of fact, we are providing plant which will have a capacity of 12,000 kilowatts.

(b.) A ring main or cable round Perth of such a nature and capacity

and in such situation as the engineers of the parties shall, having regard to the probable requirements of both the Government and the corporation, advise; the ring main, if not passing through the said power station, to include the necessary connection thereto;

Hon. Frank Wilson: I would suggest that we should go into Committee and then the Premier could read the agreement clause by clause and we could criticise it.

The PREMIER: I do not want hon. members on the second reading to misunderstand the purport of the agreement. They might perhaps take up an attitude on the second reading which in Committee they might feel disposed to change. The second clause of the agreement provides—

The initial requirements of the Government and of the corporation shall be deemed to be 2,500 kilowatts respectively; and the corporation shall give notice in writing to the Government of its initial requirements at each point of delivery.

And then it goes on to state that if further current is required, they must give us reasonable notice. The third clause of the agreement reads—

The Government shall supply and the Corporation shall take, during the continuance of this agreement, all electrical energy (hereinafter referred to as current) required by the corporation, subject nevertheless to Clause 2 hereof, and to the other provisions herein contained.

The next clause, which deals with the pressure system and delivery, provides—

The current to be supplied by the Government to the Corporation shall be delivered as high tension current at the bus-bars of the said high tension switch gear at a pressure of 6,000 volts on the three-phase alternating system and with a periodicity of 40 cycles per second.

Mr. George: Do you mind explaining that.

The PREMIER: If necessary, I will explain it to the hon. member.

Mr. Bolton: Ah! You did not expect that.

The PREMIER: With reference to substations, it is provided—

The corporation shall provide and keep in good repair and condition on the ring main, suitable fireproof substations for the reception of such high tension switch gear and meter panels provided by the Government as aforesaid as shall be required for delivery and metering the current to be taken by the corporation.

We provide here that the corporation shall establish their own substations and in some cases it is anticipated we shall arrange with the city council to provide the necessary switch gears.

The corporation undertakes that none of its agents, servants or contractors, without the consent of the Government, shall in any way interfere with the service apparatus in any substation used for supplying the corporation, and shall be responsible for any damage caused thereto. The Government shall have access at all reasonable times by their servants, agents and contractors, to all the said substations.

With regard to the price of the current, it is provided—

Subject as hereinafter provided, the price to be paid to the Government by the corporation for the current supplied to it hereunder shall be the cost price per unit to the Government.

Mr. George: Have you any idea what that will be?

The PREMIER: The proviso sets out that the cost per unit to be charged by the Government for current supplied by the Government to the corporation shall not exceed three farthings per unit. That is what we estimate will be the maximum cost. While we are providing a station of a capacity of 9,000 kilowatts, it may be that the requirements at first will be only 5,000 kilowatts, so that we shall have 4,000 kilowatts for future extensions. Then we are making provision for supplying current to the Midland Junction workshops and we are entering into negotiations with the Fremantle Municipal Council and the Fremantle Harbour Trust to supply current to them as well, and we have in mind that eventually the power station



will generate all the current which will be required between Bellevue and Fremantle, and this will be supplied at a much cheaper rate than it can be supplied now. The only feature about it which is not pleasing is that the city council is to carry the burden of the tremendous amount that they had to pay for the Gas company's rights.

Mr. Taylor: That is bad management on their part.

The PREMIER: Of course; it has nothing to do with us. The city council are going in with us now, and reducing the cost to us, and saving interest and sinking fund charges and the cost of generating will be lower than it otherwise would be. We shall make a profit out of the city council, although we are actually supplying the current at cost. They have to erect their substations on the ring main from which they will have to reticulate the whole of the five miles' area. They will supply current to the Government offices and other places, and, notwithstanding all their expense for the purpose of doing that, they can only charge double the price we shall charge them. They will have to break down the current.

Mr. Bolton: That will not cost much.

The PREMIER: It will cost about £60,000, and then it will have to be reticulated. We considered it would not be wise in the interests of the ratepayers of the municipality or the taxpayers of the Government, to have one set of wires on one side of the street for the Government and another set in the same street, taking the current to private buildings over the five mile area. That would mean duplication of cost. After accepting the advice of Messrs. Merz and McLellan, we decided that it would be fair to both parties to permit all the reticulation from the lighting point of view to be done by the city council, and as far as the Government supplies are concerned they should not charge us more than double the price. I think in that respect the city council conceded us a great deal. They are to-day supplying us at 2½d. and we shall obtain it at 1½d. Then, for instance, if we establish works, say, at Canning bridge, the city council will be compelled to carry the

cables there and supply us at 1½d. In the clause relating to the price of the current it will be seen that—

(a.) The said cost price per unit for any year shall be arrived at by dividing the total cost for such year by the number of units taken by the corporation, and by the Government otherwise than under Clause 11; and for the purpose of ascertaining the number of units so taken by the corporation, the current shall be metered at high tension at the corporation's substations on the said ring main, and the number of units consumed by the Government shall be metered at high tension at Government substations on the ring main or at the power station or where required.

(b.) The total cost shall be arrived at by adding to the operating cost a percentage, to be made up as herein-after provided, on the capital cost and expenses (including the necessary cost and expenses of raising the money) incurred by the Government under Clauses 1 and 2 of this agreement, representing antiquation fund, sinking fund and interest.

I want to break off here and explain that what we propose is that the station shall pay to the Consolidated Revenue, sinking fund for the money which is being expended in its erection; it shall provide at the rate of 2 per cent. antiquation fund. We shall always have sufficient funds to keep that station in exactly the same condition as on the day it first started to generate current, and over and above that we are asking the city council to provide the interest. They have to pay into a sinking fund, and also into an antiquation fund, so that in time the Government will get back from the city council their share of the capital cost of the station, and we shall still be in charge of the station. They will contribute the sinking fund and we shall have a complete station for half its cost. In the event of this agreement being nullified, we do not repay them any of the sinking fund: it will be ours. I want members to understand that the city council are conceding something as well as the Government and I admit that we have conceded

something, but we have conceded it on a basis fair to both the taxpayers of the State and the ratepayers of the municipality. Paragraph (c.) is as follows:—

The percentage referred to in the last preceding subclause shall be made up of two per cent. for antiquation fund, one per cent. for sinking fund, and the actual percentage which shall be paid by the Government by way of interest in respect of the loan to be raised for providing the said capital expenditure: Provided that from and after the date when the said sinking fund shall enable the redemption of the said loan nothing shall be charged for sinking fund or interest, and the only percentage then included in the total cost shall be the two per cent. for antiquation fund.

After the Perth City Council has redeemed the loan, of course we cannot continue to further charge the sinking fund, but we are providing one per cent. sinking fund here. The next paragraph is as follows:—

The operating cost shall mean and include all the costs and expenses properly incurred by the Government in operating the said power station, supply mains, service apparatus, and plant, to be provided by the Government and in generating and delivering as aforesaid the current taken by the Government and the corporation from the said power station (excluding the capital expenditure and the interest thereon) and the cost of repairs, other than replacements or plant because it has become antiquated. Provided always that the cost per unit to be charged by the Government for current supplied by the Government to the corporation pursuant to this agreement shall not exceed three farthings per unit.

Coming to repairs and operation, Clause 7 reads as follows:—

The Government shall at all times during this agreement keep in good repair, order, and condition the said power station, supply mains, service apparatus, and plant provided by the Government, and shall operate the

same as economically as shall be consistent with efficiency and with the proper upkeep of the plant.

It is provided in Clause 8 that "The corporation and the Government respectively shall maintain the power factor at the respective points of delivery at not less than eighty per cent. Now Clause 9 is the one that will interest hon. members most. It is as follows:—

Subject to the proviso hereto, nothing in this agreement shall derogate from, or be construed to derogate from, the rights, powers, and privileges vested in the corporation under and by virtue of the "Perth Municipal Gas and Electric Lighting Act, 1911." Provided that during the currency of this agreement and so long as the Government shall supply current to the corporation to the full extent of its requirements, the corporation will not itself generate current.

Mr. George: They will still keep on the gas works.

The PREMIER: Yes. This has nothing to do with gas, but after our generating station is supplying them with current they must close down their present electric light station and take the whole of their current from the Government. The question of supply to local authorities is dealt with in Clause 10, which is as follows:—

The corporation shall, at any time if so required by any municipal council or road board whose district is situated wholly or partly within a radius of five miles from the General Post Office, enter into an agreement with such local authority to supply it with current in bulk on the alternating system, at the corporation's standard pressure for the time being, at a price to be mutually agreed upon between the corporation and such local authority, or in default of agreement to be fixed by arbitration between them: Provided that if the corporation shall at any time make default in the performance of its obligation under this clause to supply current to any local authority, it shall in such event (but not otherwise) be lawful for the Government to supply cur-

rent to such local authority. Except as herein provided, the Government shall not supply current to any person or corporation within the said radius of five miles from the General Post Office.

I want hon. members to appreciate the difficulties that face us here? I know, of course, members would naturally expect that the Government, in providing a power station, would insist upon the right to private current to all and sundry at any point. But if we did that we would actually be operating in contravention of the decision of Parliament in 1911, when they granted those powers to the Perth City Council. And in view of the further point I have explained, we think it is fair to the Government, to the Perth City Council, and to the other local authorities that we should allow the Perth City Council to supply current for all purposes, except tramway and traction purposes, within five miles radius from the General Post Office. And, while I admit the Perth City Council was desirous, at the outset, that we should state definitely in this agreement the actual prices which they should charge, we declined to do so, because we believed it to be a matter which should be fixed between the Perth City Council and the other local authorities. It is only in conformity with the right conferred on the Perth City Council, and we do not give the city council any right to compel another local authority to accept current from them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They cannot supply without the consent of the local authority.

The PREMIER: That is so. They must get their authority. But we provide that, in the event of disagreement between the Perth City Council and another local authority, the matter should be submitted to arbitration. That is much fairer than having the Government entering into it. If they cannot agree on the price they can go to arbitration, and if the adjoining local authority considers that the price fixed by arbitration is too high they can cancel it, and decline to go any further. The Perth City Council can go anywhere within a five miles radius, without let or hindrance, at the pre-

sent time. We did that, with our eyes open, in 1911.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, it dates back much further than that.

The PREMIER: But in 1911 we passed the Act which conferred on the Perth City Council the rights they secured from the Perth Gas Company. Those rights will continue under this. We are not giving them any more rights than they received in 1911.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: But what is the good of the clause if they have that power?

The PREMIER: If the clause is of no use, it does not affect the position. If, to-day, they can go into another local authority's boundary and supply current, it does not matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They cannot do it to-day.

The PREMIER: Then we have not changed it. We have not changed the law in the slightest degree by this agreement. But we have done something, namely, we have protected the other local authorities to the extent that we say that in the event of a disagreement they shall go to arbitration, and if the price there fixed is so high that the local authority will not accept it, they may go on generating their own light, as to-day. If, on the other hand, the price fixed at arbitration is so low that the Perth City Council is not prepared to provide the current we can step in and provide it at any price we choose. After the city council refuses to supply we can go in, but not until then. Clause 11 reads as follows:—

The corporation shall supply and the Government shall take from the corporation, during the continuance of this agreement, at the corporation's standard low pressure, all current required by the Government for use within a radius of five miles from the General Post Office, Perth, other than for traction or tramways or purposes incidental thereto, or for use at the power station. The current shall be supplied under and subject to the same conditions as current is supplied for the time being by the corporation to private consumers: Provided that the price to be paid by the Government for current so

supplied shall be such price as may be mutually agreed upon, but shall not exceed double the price payable by the corporation to the Government for current delivered at the high-tension in the same period.

It means a maximum of 1½d. per unit.

Mr. Wisdom: Does that include the supply to the railways?

The PREMIER: No, that comes under "Traction." Then we deal with accounts and meter readings, availability of supply, and the inspection of plant. The accounts are to be kept by the Government. Clause 18 reads as follows:—

This agreement shall remain in force for fifty years from the date hereof, and thereafter until the same shall be determined by three years' notice in writing by either party to the other. If the Government shall be the party giving the notice to determine this agreement, then two years prior to the determination thereof the Government shall pay to the corporation a sum equal to the amount of all contributions which the corporation shall be deemed to have made to the sinking fund by virtue of paragraph 6 of this agreement.

That is, if we forcibly compel the Perth City Council to get out, and they have already paid, in that period, perhaps half of the total capital cost, we shall refund them the amount paid in; but if of their own volition they go out we pay them nothing. On the other hand, notwithstanding the fact that we can be the party terminating the agreement after that period, we only pay them the actual amount they have paid into the sinking fund. But that sinking fund is earning compound interest, which is received wholly by the Government; so from that point of view the Government are receiving something to their advantage—only, of course, in the event of the agreement being broken.

Mr. Male: And what about the anti-quation fund?

The PREMIER: It is handled entirely by the Government. Indeed all moneys are, and all accounts. One reason why the Perth City Council agreed that we should not refund them the earnings of

the sinking fund was because we have the cost of handling it, and had the trouble and the responsibility of finding the capital in the first instance. We also had the responsibility of investing the sinking fund. Under these circumstances they are prepared to waive their right to the earnings of the sinking fund. Then we come to arbitration.

Mr. Wisdom: Does that apply to local authorities?

The PREMIER: Only in regard to this agreement, but we make special provision for arbitration in respect of current.

Mr. Wisdom: Where?

The PREMIER: In Clause 10. It will be seen by Clause 21 that—

This agreement is conditional on all necessary powers being conferred upon the Government by the Parliament of Western Australia to enable the Government to give effect to the provisions of this agreement and for otherwise carrying the same into execution.

In conclusion I say we have entered into this after very careful consideration, and on the best advice procurable. Whilst the cost of the power station is going to be greater than first estimated, it is due to two reasons. Shortly after the estimate for the erection of the power station was got out, a general rise in price of approximately 33 per cent. took place in the old country. Moreover, the machinery necessary for the economical and safe working of the power station can be supplied only by a very limited number of firms. We are restricted in the choice of machines from different firms, with the result, of course, that when there was so much demand for electrical machinery and plant in different parts of the world the prices jumped considerably, to 33 per cent. in most cases, and at least to 10 per cent. On the other hand, we first proposed to erect a generating station of 9,000 kilowatts, but eventually, after considering all things, the extending of the tramways, and electric lighting and the supplying of current for all purposes, from Fremantle to Bellevue, and the possible electrification of the suburban railway system, we decided to increase the

power from 9,000 to 12,000 kilowatts, and after it was also shown that it would be more economical than the plant we had previously proposed. And then again we have increased the size of the power house, the foundations of which and the structure itself are a costly item. Indeed we estimate the foundations will cost about £40,000. We have increased the size in order that it may take an additional unit, and with that additional unit the station will eventually have a capacity of 16,000 kilowatts, which it is believed will be sufficient to supply the requirements of the Government for the next 25 years, including the electrification of the railway from Fremantle to Northam.

Mr. Gill: Will you explain the reason for putting the power house down by the river.

The PREMIER: The matter was considered very carefully by Messrs. Merz and McLellan, and the site is considered to have many advantages. It has the advantage of a plentiful supply of fresh water, which is essential. That was the primary consideration. The second consideration was that, whilst the site had the supply of water there, it was also advantageously situated in regard to the coal supply. There will be little or no handling of coal from the time it enters the truck at Collie until it reaches the ash heap at the station. It will be dumped from the hopper wagons into self-feeding bins and from those bins into self-feeding boilers, and thence into self-relieving ash trays, and so taken away, without any handling at all.

Mr. Lewis: Are the foundations all right?

The PREMIER: The foundations are very satisfactory. We have had to drive numerous piles for the purpose of carrying the concrete float, which makes the foundation, but we have ascertained by boring and pile driving that the foundations are satisfactory.

Mr. George: Are the piles powellised?

The PREMIER: Yes, every one; we took that precaution. I want hon. members to view the agreement not in regard to any one particular clause. To do that

might cause hon. members to consider that the agreement was unfair to either the city council or the Government. I may explain that we had great difficulty in finalising the agreement, because the council would continually look at one clause and the Government continually look at another. But when all the provisions of the agreement were boiled down we settled on an agreement which is satisfactory to the city council, satisfactory from our point of view, and satisfactory from the point of view of the users of the current.

Mr. Taylor: You have extended the time from 21 years to 50?

The PREMIER: Yes, the agreement was originally for a term of 21 years. It was a tremendous undertaking for the city council to scrap their existing plant and come in with the Government for a short period only. They wanted an agreement for 99 years, and ultimately we compromised at 50 years.

Member: Will you use Collie coal?

The PREMIER: Yes, at 6s. a ton.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I do not think you will get the stuff you want at 6s.

The PREMIER: Oh yes, we will get the smalls, but in any case that statement about calculating on 6s. per ton is not correct. I am not prepared to disclose what price we are calculating on. We are making provision for the use of Collie coal exclusively, but in the event of that supply failing we can fall back on Newcastle coal. I move—

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

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I have listened with a considerable amount of interest to the explanation of the Premier in regard to this measure, and I may say at once that I have no objection to a contract of this description being entered into with the municipality of Perth. We have, as the Premier has stated, recognised the transfer to the council of the powers that the old gas company held, and now if a satisfactory arrangement can be made, and apparently on the showing of the Premier it has been made, whereby the council and the Government can become partners

in the supply of electric current on a large scale, and on suitable terms, I do not see that we can take exception to the arrangement; nor would we wish to do so, because, after all is said and done, this is not like two firms desiring to make a profit out of the venture. We have on the one hand the Government representing the people of the State as a whole, who will be very large consumers of the product of this power station, and on the other hand, the municipal council, representing the ratepayers of Perth. Neither of them is a profit earning body, and, therefore, if there is a little profit or advantage accruing to either the Government or the council, it is not of such importance as it might be in a deal between the Government and a private firm working for profit. In either case the public will get the benefit. Of course, whatever the Government get will be a benefit to the whole country, whilst what the council may save will be a benefit to the ratepayers of the City only. It is rather difficult to go right through the agreement while the Premier is talking about it, and get a sufficiently accurate grasp of the terms contained therein; however, he dealt with the agreement clause by clause and explained pretty fully, where he deemed it necessary, the bearing of the different provisions. Therefore, I think members who have listened to the Premier will be fairly well seized of the main features of the agreement which it is proposed to ratify. The one thing that weighs with me is that the two main parties concerned, the Government and the corporation of Perth, have drawn up the agreement. The council must have been considering its provisions for many months past.

Mr. Taylor: They had an agreement last December and this is a new one dated October.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): This is the only one that has been signed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: At any rate this is the final agreement, draft agreements are nothing, and the fact

that the council must have sat many times considering the terms of the agreement, and have signed and completed it, goes to show that the representatives of the ratepayers are satisfied with the bargain they have struck.

Mr. Lewis: Not the outside bodies.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It remains for us to consider whether the Government representing the people of the State, controlled by this Parliament of course, have made a satisfactory arrangement so far as the country is concerned, and we have also to consider whether any rights of bodies outside the two principal parties affected have been duly observed.

Mr. Taylor: They have never been consulted in the drawing up of this agreement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It will not affect them except as individual citizens of the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This is the view I have got after listening to the Premier. We can pass over the question of equity so far as the Perth Municipal Council are concerned, for we may take it they have looked after the interests of the ratepayers of Perth.

Mr. Taylor: They are on velvet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Oh no, they are not on velvet. They have a big going concern and that they are abandoning. They have to scrap a valuable property and, therefore, they must have some return which will give the people of Perth some compensation for having abandoned this going concern. So far as I can judge, the people of Perth are getting a very fair deal. It appears to me that the city council cannot be producing current at anything like the price they are to get it at from the Government under this agreement. It must cost them more than the maximum of three farthings that has been laid down in this agreement.

The Premier: It is costing them twopence.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If that be so, I am right in saying that the people of Perth have got a good consideration, and, so far as they are concerned, we can

pass this Bill. Now we have to look at the Bill from the Government point of view. Are they making a proper agreement? It seems to me this is more of a partnership. The Government and the corporation have agreed together to have these works established; the Government are to find the money and establish the works and the corporation are to scrap their own works which they are operating at the present time. They have to undertake, I should imagine by Clause 2 of the agreement, to take from the Government 2,500 kilowatts, the cost price is to be ascertained, and the council are to pay that cost price to the Government. To that extent they become practically joint owners of this power station. I do not see that we can take very much exception to an arrangement of that sort. It will benefit the people of Perth and it must lighten the cost to the Government, who are the largest consumers, as representing the people of the State. If it were not so one might take exception, but seeing that we require so much electric current for our railways and workshops and for other public institutions, it seems to me that we should endorse the arrangement from the point of view of the Government and the city council. The question of the cost to the Government of electric light appears reasonable. I have not sufficient knowledge to say whether it is exactly a fair arrangement or not. No doubt the experts on both sides have considered these conditions, and the arrangement made seems to fulfil every requirement. Coming to the outside municipalities I am not quite satisfied whether they have been duly protected. I should have preferred that any local authority having any portion of its area within a five miles radius of the town hall should have been consulted, or if not consulted, notified of the terms of this contract, in order that, if they had any representations to make or any fault to find with the conditions, or any requests to prefer to safeguard their interests, in connection with this contract, they might have had an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Taylor: The first knowledge came through the *West Australian* when the mayor of Perth presented his balance sheet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think it would have been as well if they had been allowed an opportunity to prefer any requests they might have desired.

The Premier: It would not be fair for us to exceed the powers already granted by Parliament, or to take from them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No.

The Premier: That is how we have left them. We have provided that they shall not unduly crush the local authorities. As long as a local authority considers the price too high, it need not go in.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Perth City Council would get its current under this agreement for very much less than it was costing at the present works. The cost would be about 50 per cent. of that at present. Under the Bill the Perth council could enter Subiaco and compete with so much of that municipality as came within the five miles radius of the town hall on much better conditions than they can compete to-day when their current costs 1½d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They cannot go in to an adjoining district except under the Electric Lighting Act of 1892.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What was to prevent the city council from going into Subiaco?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The Electric Lighting Act of 1892.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then the Perth City Council could not extend its operations to an adjoining municipality without the sanction of that municipality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then no exception should be taken to the Bill.

Mr. S. Stubbs: If they did the adjoining municipality could secure an injunction.

Mr. Dwyer: It will be to the benefit of the adjoining municipalities.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I daresay the Perth City Council will be in a position to give them terms which will be better than the results they are securing from their own plants.

Mr. S. Stubbs: It would be very unfair to the Subiaco municipality.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But the Perth City Council can give similar terms to the Subiaco municipality and induce them to scrap their plant as the Government have given to the Perth City Council in the agreement under which they have scrapped their plant. There is an arbitration clause in the event of the city council being unable to come to an agreement with an adjoining municipality in regard to the price to be paid for current. Under the circumstances they appear to be fully protected. These are the main features which appeal to me on the spur of the moment, but I should be glad, in Committee, to have some fuller information and to get proof of the explanation which the Honorary Minister has made by way of interjection. If that is so we can safely pass the Bill and ratify the contract.

Mr. GILL (Leederville): I think the Bill is a good one, and one which will benefit the residents, not only of Perth but of the adjoining municipalities, and it is a Bill which we can all cordially support. There is only one question likely to cause any debate so far as I am concerned, and that is the one dealing with adjoining municipalities. Under the Bill Perth will undoubtedly gain a great advantage over the present arrangement owing to the fact that they will get current for fully 50 per cent. less than it is costing them to-day, and that should compensate them a good deal and perhaps more than compensate them for scrapping their old plant. There are two municipalities in my electorate which are receiving their current from Perth. They have no plant of their own, but they are receiving it in bulk from Perth and in that respect they are concerned as to the terms of this agreement. I have waited upon the Premier with two deputations, one from

Leederville and the other from North Perth, and each was anxious that when this agreement was concluded there should be a provision for a maximum charge by the City to the outside municipalities. While they are willing that Perth should receive a fair and square deal, they contend that the city council should not be allowed to fix any charge they like.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will not the arbitration clause protect them?

Mr. GILL: The arbitrator might take up a stand which will not appeal to the outside municipalities and then they will be left in the dark.

The Premier: The local authorities you are referring to have no safeguard such as we are giving them.

Mr. GILL: They take their current by an agreement from the city council. The local authorities had to provide the poles, wires, and connections, and to that extent the city council have them under their thumb unless they are prepared to erect plants of their own.

The Premier: That is under existing conditions.

Mr. GILL: They have an agreement at present.

The Premier: Under this Bill the city council must supply them. There is absolute safety for them.

Mr. GILL: It may be an advantage over the present arrangement, and possibly they may get current at a reduced rate compared with the present time, but the arbitrator may fix a price whereby the Perth council will get more profit than they are entitled to.

Mr. Underwood: You can rely on the arbitrator if he is a Government man.

Mr. GILL: If the city council are paying three farthings the arbitrator might take the view that the other municipalities are at present paying 4d., and that if they get the current for 2½d. they will make a big saving. We view it from the point of view of a fair thing for the city council and not the advantage to the other municipalities over the existing arrangement.

The Premier: The three-farthings cost makes a basis to start from at once.



Mr. GILL: The arbitrator may split the difference between three-farthings and 4d., which is about the amount which the Leederville council are paying, and say that that will be a big saving on the present arrangement. An arbitrator generally splits the difference.

The Premier: He will have to take into consideration the fact that the city council have had to scrap their plant.

Mr. GILL: Yes, and that has been taken into consideration by arranging to supply them with current at three-farthings whereas they are paying about a 1½d. now. The Government have provided a safeguard for themselves by stipulating that the city council cannot charge more than double what the Government are charging them for the bulk, but the adjoining municipalities will be at the mercy of an arbitrator who may split the difference and thus give the city council more profit than I consider they are entitled to receive.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The arbitrator must allow a fair percentage of profit.

Mr. GILL: Yes; if I were sure that an arbitrator would allow only a fair percentage, I would be satisfied.

Hon. Frank Wilson: An arbitrator could not say "If you save one-half that is a fair thing."

Mr. GILL: I am afraid that he may.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no.

The Premier: No arbitrator would work on that basis. The main point would be the cost to the city council plus a small profit.

Mr. GILL: I want to be assured that the city council will charge the outside municipalities only a fair thing. If I am assured that that will be done I will be satisfied, but I am afraid that the city council, having scrapped their plant, will increase their charges out of proportion to what they are paying for the bulk. In supplying these municipalities, North Perth and Leederville, we could easily fix a limit, the same as the Government have done. The position does not appeal to me as being satisfactory, and I would like the Premier to have the Committee stage adjourned for the present so that we may have

an opportunity of knowing what is the opinion of these municipalities in the matter.

The Premier: It does not affect them.

Mr. GILL: It does affect them. Not long ago there were two deputations asking that a maximum should be fixed.

The Premier: The city council had certain powers conferred on them previously by Parliament, and we have no right to go beyond that.

Mr. GILL: I want to see that these local authorities get the advantage of this big scheme. Where a big reduction is being made in the price of electric current I want to see the local authorities get some advantage as well as the Perth City Council.

The Premier: They never consulted us about coming in until it was a matter of fixing up an agreement.

Mr. GILL: People do not voluntarily come along and say, "We are going to come into this agreement." They are dealing with the city council and they hope to continue to deal with them on favourable terms. It would be only a fair thing to adjourn the Committee stage until these local bodies have an opportunity to express their opinions through members of this House.

The Premier: I have no objection to the Committee stage being adjourned.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion negatived.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco): With the leader of the Opposition I believe a great deal of misunderstanding at any rate would have been cleared away had the Government seen fit to invite the outside, adjoining local governing bodies to confer in regard to drawing up this agreement.

The Premier: It does not affect them.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is all very well for the Premier to say it does not affect them; he told us definitely in his speech that under the agreement they could invade another local governing body's territory. I believe the Premier made a mistake. I do not think that is correct. When:

the draft of the agreement was first published in the paper the mayor and councillors of Subiaco were very much alive to the position, and I have been assisting them and have had two or three consultations with the Solicitor General with regard to the matter.

The Premier: You had no right.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I think I am justified in going to him when there is anything affecting my electorate. The Premier agreed one day to meet the mayor of Subiaco and myself and afterwards refused when we were on the doorstep. The Solicitor General told me in his opinion the city council would have no power whatever to invade any other local governing body's territory, and I believe from the reading of the Act of 1892 that they have not that power without a special proclamation issued by the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. Layman: They could easily get that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There would have to be something in the form of a request from the local governing body. In regard to Clause 10 of the agreement I think something further should be provided to safeguard these authorities.

The Premier: You mean not to safeguard, but to give them something.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I mean "safeguard." The arbitrator may only take into consideration the fact that these local governing bodies may be getting a reduction on what it is costing them for current to-day, either taking it from the city council or generating it themselves. If such is the case I think a maximum could very easily be fixed which would protect these outside bodies and also give justice to the city council. No outside body would expect to come in and get as good treatment as the city council or the Government. These two bodies are putting the capital into the concern and no outside body would expect to come along and get its current as cheaply as the city council or the Government get theirs. But I think these outside bodies should be protected so that they would not be called upon to provide interest and sinking fund, and by that means be compelled to shoulder the capital cost and thus relieve the Government and the city council of the

cost of the work. There are a lot of local governing bodies around the city of Perth to-day and it is these outside districts which are going to grow. A large population is going to settle in these outskirts and a great deal of electric current is going to be used in these districts for road lighting and other purposes. If the Perth City Council can put an undue charge on these outside bodies they will get the whole of their interest and sinking fund out of these bodies. I believe some provision should be put into the Bill which would at least limit the powers of the arbitrator, because I believe he may be actuated in the way the member for Leederville has indicated. I would ask the Premier to put the Committee stage of the Bill off until about Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

The Premier: Next Tuesday week?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is a fair proposition.

The Premier: It is subject to you not bringing along deputations.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not want to bring along deputations; the time for deputations has gone by. It would give these local governing bodies an opportunity to go into the matter and get legal advice if necessary, and have their views expressed in this Chamber.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I cannot understand the argument used by the hon. member for Subiaco when he stated the Government should have called a meeting of outside bodies surrounding the city of Perth to discuss this question. There would have been just as much occasion to call a meeting from Fremantle or Midland Junction, which places are in exactly a similar position. The facts are that the Government found it necessary after purchasing the tramways that a new electric plant should be established in the City to provide additional power. The Perth City Council had found also that it was necessary for them to instal a new plant to provide additional current for lighting and for those who were using electricity as a power. Consequently it was only natural that the two bodies should consult with a view to

ascertain whether it would not be possible to arrange to have one plant erected instead of two small ones, so that they could have a better class of machinery and more economy of working through there being one staff to work instead of two, in fact a reduction all round so far as cost is concerned through having one plant instead of two. That being so there were only two parties involved, the Perth City Council and the Government, and, therefore, there was no necessity to call the others in. They had no interest in the matter whatever because at that time the stage had never arisen where the Government had any intention of supplying those outside, and the outside municipalities and roads districts were in an exactly similar position before the Government purchased this plant to what they are in to-day. We must remember that it will be in the interests of the Perth municipality and also in the interests of the Government to supply the outside local authorities at as cheap a rate as possible because the greater their output the less will be the cost of generating the electricity, and there would be a reduction in their own cost through having a very large output rather than by having an output confined as at present. Therefore, there is no fear that the city council would put an undue charge on these people for the electricity they supply, as it would be in the interests of Perth to have a large output so as to be able to reduce the price as far as their ratepayers are concerned. It is a matter of impossibility that the city of Perth should compel the outside bodies to provide interest and sinking fund to leave those in the city clear of providing this money. The same safeguards exist to-day if this Bill becomes law as previous to this Bill being introduced. The hon. member for Subiaco knows full well that when the Perth Gas Company had this plant in their possession the Subiaco council immediately put up a plant of their own. The hon. member knows the Perth Gas Company could not go into their district with a view to supplying electricity. Although they had every power to supply gas they had no power to supply electricity unless a license was granted and a proclamation is-

sued by the Governor-in-Council to enable them to do so. Then that is only under an agreement which the Subiaco council may desire to enter into with the Gas Company, subject to the conditions laid down in the Electric Lighting Act, 1892. The same provision applies so far as the city council is concerned, with the exception that in the case of the Perth Gas Company, profit was the one object. With the city council, a reduction in the price of current is the first object. It is to their interests to supply electricity to the ratepayers at the cheapest possible price, and that can be done with the reduction in the cost of generating electricity. I certainly do not see any reason for fear so far as the local authorities are concerned. In my opinion, if this is a good agreement both for the Government and the city council, it is an equally good agreement for the outside authorities, because if any undue charge is made they will still be in the same position as before. They will be able to erect plants themselves and supply their own districts with current. The matter is entirely in their own hands.

Mr. DWYER (Perth) : From the fact that the city council and the representatives of the Government met together to decide upon the terms of this agreement, and that they have signed the agreement, it may be concluded that the terms are equitable. It seems to me that each side gets a distinct advantage. The Government find themselves in the position of having to instal a new plant to provide current for tramway purposes and for future extensions; the city council are possessed of a plant which they have found it necessary to alter and improve. The position apparently has been met in this way: the city council and the Government have agreed to join forces, the Government are to get a large quantity of electricity and the city council will be saved the necessity of providing a fresh plant and they will get the current at a price fixed under the agreement, a price which I think is reasonable. So far as the city council and the Government, the two parties to the agreement, are concerned the arrangements arrived at appear to be quite satisfactory, but it

is contended that some injustice may be done to outlying municipalities by this agreement being confirmed. I think a review of the situation will show that no injustice will be done or is intended to be done or could be done under the proposed agreement. Under the Perth Gas Company's Act, 1886, the Perth Gas Company had the right to supply gas to all places within a radius of five miles from the General Post Office. That was the first step in the legislation dealing with lighting. Subsequently to that the Electric Lighting Act, 1892, was passed, and by that Act any council could supply electricity, or contract with others to supply electricity within its own municipal boundaries or outside its own limits on a proclamation by the Governor-in-Council defining the extent outside the limits of the municipality. The next step was the amending Act of 1902, which empowered the Perth Gas Company to supply electricity as well as gas, but it is definitely mentioned in that, subject to the provisions of the Electric Lighting Act, 1892, in other words, the Perth Gas Company in supplying electricity could not go into a municipality without the consent of that municipality or without a proclamation by the Governor-in-Council, and I think it goes without saying that the Governor-in-Council would not make the proclamation without the consent of the municipality concerned. Then the Perth Municipal Gas and Electric Lighting Act, 1911, placed the municipal councils in the same position as the Gas Company as regards the supply of electricity. Therefore the position at the present time is that the Perth City Council has to confine its operations to its own municipal boundaries so far as electric lighting is concerned, and now it is said that the Bill before us attempts to give them some extra powers. A perusal of Clause 10, however, will show that no extensive powers are given. That clause simply says that the city council, if required by any of the outside municipalities, may supply electric current at a rate to be fixed by arbitration. All the statutory rights which the municipalities have under the Electric Lighting Act of 1892

are absolutely conserved. They can if they like, and this agreement gives them the power, to go to the city council and say, "We require you to supply us with current at a price which we will endeavour to fix with you." Then, if an agreement cannot be arrived at, the price is to be fixed by arbitration and if the city council refuse to supply the current the Government can step in and supply the municipality direct. It seems to me, therefore, that an endeavour has been made to raise a bogey as regard the position of the outside municipalities. I cannot see that any injustice will be done to those bodies.

Mr. LEWIS (Canning): I have listened to the remarks of the Premier when introducing this measure and I am thoroughly convinced that so far as both the Government and the city council are concerned, the agreement is satisfactory. At the same time, I contend the outside local authorities should have been consulted when the agreement was drawn up, because undoubtedly this will give to the city council a monopoly over the five mile radius, and, as it has been pointed out, that they are to get a new plant and that they will scrap the existing one, they will, no doubt, endeavour to make up the difference out of the outside bodies. I realise that this is a Committee Bill and that we will have an opportunity of amending it when it reaches the Committee stage. I was pleased to hear the Premier state that he would not take the Committee stage for a week so that the outside bodies might have an opportunity of perusing the agreement and suggesting amendments. I would like to know, however, why the radius of the City Council's operations was fixed at five miles. This place is growing rapidly and it might be desired to enter into arrangements to supply current to localities outside that radius. I shall endeavour, in the Committee stage, to bring about amendments which will have the effect of protecting the outside bodies.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): When I remember the stormy passage of the last Redistribution of Seats Bill, two and a half years ago, and the terms that were used to describe me and my colleagues for having introduced such a measure to this House and the abuse that I had to put up with—

Mr. Underwood: And which you deserved.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And which was absolutely undeserved, and the untrue statements that were made throughout the country with respect to that measure, I naturally look with some interest at the present proposals of the Government.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Yours was a gerrymandering Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think that the figures have shown conclusively it was no such thing and that gerrymandering existed only in the imagination of the biased partisans of the party opposite and those like the hon. member who interjected.

The Premier: I think for your own peace of mind, you had better keep off that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I intend to go right on with it. With regard to this measure, which I have not had much time to study, I find that it does not contain many clauses, but let me say at once that I cannot quite understand what need there is for a Bill of this nature. It is proposed that they should get authority from Parliament to appoint commissioners to draft some sort of a redistribution of seats, which will be ultimately brought before Parliament by way of a Bill. The Government are in just as good a position, without the Bill, to appoint the commission to draft a scheme on any terms they may think equitable and proper, and on the report of that commission they could have brought down the Bill and submitted it right away, a Bill which would provide what they thought was a fair measure of redistribution for the representation of

the people in Parliament. And they could have produced the report in substantiation of their contention that the terms of the measure were fair and equitable. We are asked to give a power which they already possess. There is no need to give that power, and for that reason, amongst others, I object to the present Bill. They are hiding themselves and their proposals, shall I say, gerrymandering proposals, behind the commissioners. They have the power to appoint these commissioners; they have the power to instruct them where they are not instructed by the measure itself. At any rate, they have the power to amplify the instructions to the commissioners, and they are afraid to undertake the responsibility of bringing down the measure straight away, and accepting it as theirs and voting upon it. It is like all their acts. It is like every action of the Minister for Works, who laughs, but knows well that what I am saying is true. They shelter themselves behind their permanent officers, behind commissions, behind anybody and anything, rather than come into the open and accept the responsibility. We had the Minister for Works the other day sheltering himself behind responsible officers. We had it from the Attorney General, at Geraldton, the other day, when he said that they had not bought the "Western Australia" steamer, that Sir Newton Moore had bought it; that they knew that Sir Newton Moore had made a mistake, a bad bargain, but did not everybody make mistakes at times, and that they could sell it and get another one afterwards. It seems to me they would have some difficulty in selling that boat. But, nevertheless, what I object to is that they cannot take their own responsibility. We are asked to approve of this measure, and when one looks through it and weighs it up one can only come to the conclusion that it is a bald attempt to concentrate representation in the industrial centres of the country. The metropolitan area, extending from Midland Junction to Fremantle, and the Eastern Goldfields, will gain very largely. The goldfields as a whole will not gain, but the populous centres, such as Boulder,

will, and the metropolitan area will gain enormously under the system laid down in the Bill. So we have this fact in evidence, that the attempt is to have representation on pretty well a population basis, and that the representation of the centres of population, like the metropolitan area, is to be increased very considerably. The electoral scheme that we have at the present time, under which hon. members were elected in 1911, was bitterly criticised; fault was found with it on every occasion, and for all sorts of imaginative reasons. I have said already that we were reviled, we were designated by cruel terms; indeed I thought on many occasions if I had taken the terms applied to myself seriously I should have been in durance vile rather than be a member of this House, for having dared to introduce that measure. But it was a just measure, absolutely. And it has proved itself to have been just by the numbers on the rolls at that election and the numbers on the rolls at the present time in the different electorates. The scheme was based on just lines. The country was divided up into a system of groups. Let me review the scheme for the benefit of hon. members who do not know what that scheme was, what it is, and who were hoodwinked, as they in turn hoodwinked thousands of electors by misrepresentation of the intention and the effects of the measure. Notwithstanding that they have to-day demonstration of the fact that their party is in power, which in itself ought to be a refutation of any charge of gerrymandering, hon. members will still continue to use the offensive term. If it were a gerrymandering measure—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If it was, the hon. member would not be here.

The Premier: His presence is an evidence of the wrath of the public.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, his presence, and that of many others, is evidence of the lying statements made throughout the country with regard to that measure, and the false impressions created. The scheme was based on justice, and I fail to see why at the present jun-

ture we should have any proposal to alter the system. I can understand that the Premier and his colleagues must by necessity justify those charges and their promises on the hustings, by bringing in some sort of measure, with the hope lying behind it that it will get short shrift, that it will not become law. They know they do not want any alteration, that the present division of the country into groups of interests is a fair one, that the representation, so far as the quotas are concerned, is eminently fair, and that nothing they can do by way of legislation at the present juncture will give a fairer measure or fairer representation, so far as the people are concerned, than the measure we at present sit under. The groups were divided up having regard to their interests, having regard to the identical interests of the people in the different divisions, and having due consideration for the similarity of their characteristics. Community of interests was considered, and even to-day we find the Attorney General, notwithstanding the sneers of the Premier, admits that that must be a matter for very serious consideration in his proposal. Hon. members will remember that we had the metropolitan area considered, that any differences had identical interests. So, too with the metropolitan-suburban divisions. Then there were the Fremantles, the main port, and the surrounding municipalities, having interests all their own. We had the mining centres, both thickly and thinly populated; because we must not disfranchise large areas of the mineral belt on the grounds that they happen to have a small and scattered population. We had the same thing in regard to our agricultural areas, the thickly populated districts and the thinly populated, all to be considered; then the outports, as compared with Fremantle; the great timber industry; the coal mining industry; and the far Nor'-West. These were the groups, practically four outstanding groups, but ultimately divided after consideration of the interests of the groups I have just referred to. Thus we got what is so much sneered at to-day by the leaders of the Labour party, namely that community of interests which it is essen-

tial shall be recognised. I venture to say that community of interests is a thing that ought to be first and foremost in the consideration of distribution of electoral boundaries, instead of making it a secondary consideration, as the Attorney General has done in this measure. In making the divisions he lays it down that consideration shall be given by the commissioners to, first, the means of communication and the distance from the capital; secondly, the physical features, and, thirdly, community or diversity of interests. These have to be taken into consideration in the order in which they are set down. I venture to think that is a direct attempt to stifle community or diversity of interests altogether in the selection. It is an attempt to do away with the due weight that ought to be attached to community of interests, and to put it in the background, taking population and population only as the main consideration when arranging these divisions. A peculiar feature about the measure and the Attorney General's speech is that, notwithstanding they are doing this which I have just explained, they recognise that community of interests ought to be the main consideration, by doing the very thing that the Minister for Works, by interjection, referred to, namely by excluding the North-West electorates from the scheme outlined in the Bill.

Mr. Male: They are robbing us of a seat.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They exclude the North-West electorates, Kimberley, Roebourne, Pilbara and Gascoyne, because, from the Attorney General's speech, they have peculiar circumstances, peculiar interests, they are in a different category altogether from the other electorates of the State. They realise that so far as the North-West is concerned, they cannot apply the principle of representation on an electoral population basis. They realise that the interests up there are not the same, but differ considerably from the interests down here. They realise that the pursuits are not identical, that different treatment is necessary, and direct representation is required, if they are to re-

ceive that fair consideration at the hands of Parliament which they expect. If this is so, and I take it even the Attorney General will not deny that is his view, I want to know why the same consideration should not be given to the agricultural centres. In the agricultural centres we have special interests. It is true that all of them are not such long distances from the capital. It is true that perhaps some agricultural centres have not got such tremendous physical features as the North-West and the means of communication are not quite so reduced, but, nevertheless, they are just as distinctive, and if the argument holds good that the North-West is entitled, owing to its special circumstances, to special consideration, I venture to claim for the agricultural districts that they are also entitled, owing to special circumstances, to that special consideration which the last Redistribution of Seats Act gave them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They have much fairer consideration than your Redistribution of Seats Bill gave them.

The Premier interjected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am proposing what was in my Bill, which is the law to-day, a just and equitable law. The Premier proposes to take a member away from the outback mining districts.

The Premier: I am not taking a member away from anywhere except the North-West.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier knows that he is taking a member away.

The Premier: I do not know how the redistribution is going to pan out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier proposes to give six extra members to the metropolitan districts. Where is he going to get them from? The Premier has figured this thing out, and I venture to say caucus has also had a hand in it.

The Premier: Have you figured it out?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have.

The Premier: Where do you find yourself?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In exactly the same position as I am in this House to-day and where I will be for the next 10 years.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Except that I will be on the other side. The Trades Hall has considered this thing and the Premier knows exactly how it is going to pan out. The Attorney General can tell him in a few words that he is going jamb the representation into the industrial centres. He is going to centralise every time by giving parliamentary representation on a population basis, increasing the members of the metropolitan area, and taking them away from country districts. What are the special circumstances which warranted us in giving the people of the far North-West the representation which they enjoy to-day? They have four members at the present time, and what are the special considerations which made the Attorney General leave the North-West out of the scheme set out for the commissioners' guidance? I take it those special considerations are the hugeness of the area, the sparseness of the population, the vast possibility of development, the long distance from the capital and seat of Government, the physical features and the special interests and occupations of the people. Those are the matters that weighed with the Attorney General and convinced him that the North-West should be excluded from the general scheme, otherwise it would be treated unfairly. The same reasons as I have enunciated hold good so far as the agricultural areas are concerned and also in regard to the sparsely populated mining districts. The Attorney General says that the electors close to the city should have a larger quota. He believes that representation should not be altogether on a population basis, but he does not provide that they shall have a larger quota.

The Attorney General: We do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: On the other hand it is laid down here, simply as a permissive power, in order to prevent any possibility of getting equality, that the quota shall be the number of electors divided by the number of seats.

The Attorney General: They are allowed a 20 per cent. margin above or below.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then make it mandatory. This is only to cover any inaccuracy of figures.

Mr. Dwyer: It is an instruction to the commission.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I take exception to the reading which the hon. member puts upon the clause. It is not an instruction to the commission to allow that 20 per cent.; it is simply that they may adopt that allowance, but the Bill makes it a hard and fast enactment that in no case shall they exceed the 20 per cent. If they go to the extent of 20 per cent. above or below it will be passed, but it is not mandatory. Their instruction is to keep to that quota.

The Premier: The clause says that the quota of electors shall be the basis for the division of the State into electoral districts "except as hereinafter provided," and the provision hereinafter is that consideration shall be given to means of communication, distance from the capital, physical features, and community or diversity of interests.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The commissioners may adopt a margin of allowance but there is a limit to that margin of allowance. Their clear instruction is to adopt the quota. I was pointing out that the special considerations which have been extended to the North-West portion of the State should be equally applicable to the agricultural centres and the thinly populated mining districts the Premier has referred to. We provided that in our Bill and it is the law to-day. We provided that the city should have larger quotas than outside districts, and justly so, and the figures which have since become available show that it was an equitable redistribution of seats, and even on the quotas which were estimated at the time the result has panned out pretty well exactly as the then Attorney General, in introducing the measure, prophesied. We find that the total enrolment in 1911 was 152,000, roughly speaking, of whom nearly 6,000 were in the four North-West seats. So that we had 146,000 on the roll last general election, and a quota, after deducting the North-West members and



dividing the total by 47, of 3,125. When the Bill was introduced by the then Attorney General (Mr. Nanson) he pointed out that the North-West, notwithstanding that the numbers were very few, would increase somewhat, and that at any rate the interests of the people up there were so exceptional that we were justified in giving them special consideration, even as the Attorney General is doing to-day, and Mr. Nanson in his figures showed that the estimated number of electors for those four seats would be 4,900. The roll for 1911 showed that there were 5,763 electors in those seats, whilst the roll for 1913 gives 5,551, showing that the estimate was accurate, that, whereas we were denounced for the representation given on the figures then made public and put before the House, we were justified in giving that representation. The Gascoyne district was estimated to have 1,400 electors, to-day it has 1,771. Kimberley was estimated to have 1,600, to-day it has 1,293. Pilbara was estimated to have 1,200, to-day it has 1,091. Roebourne is the only district of the four that is at all far out, and even then the difference is on the right side. It was estimated to have 700 electors and to that great exception was taken, but to-day it is 1,396, showing that the anticipation of Mr. Nanson, even so far as the North-West was concerned, that those districts would increase in electoral population, of course more slowly than other districts, has been verified, and the representation accorded to them was fully justified. The quota for the North-West on the latest returns would be 1,833 for three seats as proposed. The metropolitan seats pan out even better, and it is interesting to note that the total on the rolls for the metropolitan seats, Perth, Fremantle, Claremont, Canning, Guildford, Subiaco, Leederville, and so on, was 54,000 at the last general election in 1911. Mr. Nanson's estimate was 51,000, and at the present time we have 52,739 names in those electorates, showing again how accurate was the adjustment and how far it was from any semblance of gerrymandering, as was charged by the members of the then Opposition. If members

will take the different seats and compare the figures, they will see there is a remarkable accuracy and it is wonderful to me that the electoral officers were able to come so near to the actual figures, as they are proved to have done by the electoral rolls, not only at the last general election but also this year.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Before tea I was dealing with the figures showing the number of electors on the rolls at the last general election, and the number at the present time, and the number estimated by the ex-Attorney General (Mr. Nanson) when he introduced the Redistribution of Seats Bill. I had pointed out that the quota on the present rolls, if adopted under the Bill now before us in connection with 47 seats, exclusive of the North-West portion of the State, would be 3,000, and I was dealing with the metropolitan seats, showing that the estimate when the Redistribution of Seats Bill in 1911 was introduced was 51,000 electors for the metropolitan seats, whereas the rolls showed in 1911 that there were 54,000 electors, and at the present time there are 52,739. This shows the wonderful accuracy of the departmental estimates made at that time. Perth had 29,000 electors on the rolls in 1911; that is taking the whole of the seats of Perth, Subiaco and Leederville, six seats. Mr. Nanson estimated that the number of electors would be 26,550, and to-day we have 27,624 on the rolls. The three seats at Fremantle were estimated to have 11,500 electors in 1911; whereas there were actually on the rolls 11,419, and to-day there are 11,854. The metropolitan seats including Canning, Claremont, and Guildford were estimated to have 12,950 electors in 1911, and actually were proved to have 13,407; and to-day there were 13,261 electors. Where to look for more accurate figures I do not know. The present quota therefore for the present metropolitan seats would be 4,395, taking the whole of the Fremantle, Perth, and the outside metropolitan seats, Canning, Claremont and

Guildford. On a quota of 3,000, which is provided in this measure, we would have 17 seats instead of 12 at the present time; or a gain of five; and the probabilities are that the gain will be six when the figures are accurately worked out.

Mr. Bolton: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member can prove his contention later on. There will be a gain of five, and possibly six seats for the metropolitan area. Now I come to the country seats. Terrible heat was engendered in regard to these seats and to the outports. There are 21 seats between Albany and York, including of course the ports of Bunbury and Geraldton. In 1911 these had 55,492 voters actually on the roll. At the time the Bill was introduced it was estimated that the number of electors was 43,900; and hon. members will bear in mind that at that time it was made clear by the then Attorney General, that this was the rising portion of the State, and that an increasing number of electors could be rightly anticipated, day by day, month by month, and year by year. This was proved by the fact that the number rose immediately afterwards to 55,000, and at the present time, after excluding numbers that ought not to be on the rolls, there are 54,465 electors; showing again that the anticipations of the framers of that Act, and the departmental estimates were perfectly accurate, and that the consideration given to the country portions of the State was perfectly justified. The present quota of the 21 country seats, including the outports referred to, would work out at 2,591. It will be remembered that we put it down in 1911 at something like 2,250. To-day the quota is 2,591. We pointed out that it would increase and it has gone on increasing, and that quota, 2,591, is against what I gave for the metropolitan seats, 4,300.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Sussex has 1,700.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Adopting the quota under the present Bill of 3,000 these country seats would be reduced in number from 21 to 17, or 18 at the outside; we would have a loss of either three or four seats in the country districts.

Mr. Carpenter: You are misrepresenting it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The figures cannot lie; the hon. member can study them. I can give the whole of the figures in regard to each electorate if the hon. member wishes, and he can construe them in his own way.

Mr. Bolton: The same as you are doing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The figures are before me and the hon. members who are fathering the Bill do not like them or they would not take such exception. These figures are gathered from the existing rolls, from the rolls of 1911 and from the speech of the ex-Attorney General when he introduced the Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Mr. Bolton: Your figures may be right, but your quota is wrong.

The Premier: You had only one guiding principle—gerrymandering.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has adopted that principle himself, whereas my principle was sound and his charges were unfounded. The lying statements spread throughout the country at the last general elections should not have been made and were a disgrace to those who made them, and to-day the Premier not only wants to gerrymander, but to hide himself behind Commissioners, forsooth, instead of boldly producing his own measure. Passing to the goldfields, we had 13 seats in 1911, with 37,330 electors on the rolls. The estimate made by the ex-Attorney General when our Bill was introduced in 1911 was 37,276. It would be impossible to get very much nearer the mark than that. To-day the number of electors is 34,133. The prophecy, regrettable though it may have been, that the electoral population of the goldfields must diminish somewhat, which prophecy was then rebutted with any amount of heat and fire by hon. members now on the Government side, has proved to be true in fact, and the voting strength has gone back several thousands, I am sorry to say, since 1911. The present quota on the 13 seats would be 2,625 for the goldfields. The quota of 3,000 which would be adopted under this measure

would give 12 members to the goldfields instead of 13 at the present time; they would lose one seat. I can quite understand that the Premier is alarmed when I point out this fact to him, because he thinks he will be discredited in his stronghold, and that the people to whom he denounced us in unmeasured terms for having taken away a seat from them, will in turn denounce him when he, without rhyme or reason, without any need, merely to back up his foolish statements at that time, and to say "I have carried out my promise to introduce a better measure," introduces this Bill which is unnecessary and which is nothing like as equitable as the measure under which we are elected at the present time. The summary of the whole thing roughly comes out at the present time on the following basis: We have at present in the North-West, four seats; it is proposed that there shall be three; we have in the country districts which, owing to their special circumstances are entitled equally with the North-West, to fuller representation than the congested areas, 21 seats; and it is proposed under this Bill to give them 17 seats.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Nothing of the kind is proposed and you know it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Possibly there may be 18 at the outside, but 17 is more likely to be the number. The goldfields at present have 13 representatives; it is proposed under this measure to give them 12. Perth, Fremantle, and the suburbs at the present time have 12 seats; it is proposed to give them 18, or an increase of six, or possibly seven. In any case they cannot possibly have fewer than an increase of four, and those four must be taken away from our agricultural districts.

Mr. Taylor: Shame!

Hn. FRANK WILSON: I say it is a shame, a howling shame, that ought not to be perpetrated. To emphasise the position so far as the country electorates are concerned, let me point out that in 1910 when the Redistribution of Seats Bill was causing so much consternation in the minds of my friends opposite, that they could not view it except through jaundiced spectacles, and must miscon-

strue and misrepresent it, these country electorates since 1905 had gained in electoral population 10,000. This was clearly emphasised and placed before Parliament at that time to support the contention that they were entitled to special treatment, special representation, because they were a rapidly increasing community. At that time they got three extra seats in view of that fact. Since 1910, when the measure was passed, they have gained an additional 10,500 in electoral population. Yet this Bill makes a reduction of four members, as I have pointed out, at the very least, if not more. That is of course if the electoral population is strictly adhered to. If we do allow the full margin of 20 per cent. above and 20 per cent. below, in defining the boundaries of these electorates, there will be two seats less for certain. The metropolitan area, hon. members must bear in mind, will, under the proposed Bill, gain whatever the other portion of the State loses. Take one seat from the North-West, one seat from the thinly-populated mining centres, take away these two at least from the agricultural districts, probably four, as I pointed out, and they must be put on to the metropolitan area and the metropolitan area would gain. Is that a just and equitable suggestion for us to consider? Is it right that we should centralise in the metropolitan area, and that the country, on which the prosperity of the whole State depends, should be deprived of this electoral representation? The evils of such an arrangement must be apparent. The paramount evil of course is centralisation. At the present time, right throughout the State, the Government are accused of doing too much in the metropolitan area, of neglecting the outlying districts, of spending too much money in Perth and Fremantle.

Mr. Bolton: Not much at Fremantle.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Very much at Fremantle. The harbour is a constant bone of contention at the outports which are being neglected. The purchase of the trams in the city of Perth, and the extension thereof, and this great scheme of a power house and plant, are all resented in outlying portions of the State, and yet

we have a proposal from these gentlemen who are never tired of denouncing centralisation and always use their utmost endeavours to persuade the electors that we were centralisers of the deepest dye, and wanted to concentrate everything in and around the capital city of Perth, they introduce this measure, which is going to take away from the country districts that representation which they are entitled to, and which they have to-day, and put it into the metropolitan area.

Mr. George: Shame !

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The evils of centralisation have been felt in the Eastern States, in New South Wales, in Victoria, and, in somewhat lesser degree in connection with Adelaide. Even in the Eastern States they do not recognise representation on absolutely a population basis by any means, for I see by the newspaper that Victoria is introducing a measure to make the quota in Melbourne 13,000, whereas the quota in the country districts is to be fixed at 8,000.

Mr. Carpenter: That is nearly as bad as the Bill which you brought in.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not quite so fair as the Bill we introduced, but it is a much fairer suggestion than the measure that has been introduced by the Attorney General on behalf of the present Government. Even in the Motherland and other countries they never act upon the principle of representation on a population basis in its entirety. Vast areas of Western Australia require special attention; they require special conditions, which perhaps might not be so applicable to a closely-populated country like the Motherland. The South-West is to be opened up. We hear a lot of that from our friends opposite.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There are 1,700 only in your electorate.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I say there were 2,240 at the last election. I had a quota of 2,240 and what is more to the purpose, I had a very substantial majority. This great south-western district has to be opened up, and it does not matter what argument is put up, if we are going to concentrate our Parliamentary representation in Perth, Fremantle,

and the surrounding municipalities, we will never get our outlying districts properly represented and attended to. The unfortunate part about the whole business is that my friends opposite look on the industrial population always as Labour supporters, and therefore their feverish anxiety to give them this increased representation. The North-West, which is admitted by the Attorney General to have special claims, because he has excluded it from the ordinary quota provided in this Bill, with its four members to-day, does not receive just attention. What have the Government done for the North-West, notwithstanding that they have three of the members supporting them? How much better attention is the North-West going to get when the Government reduce the members and the representation for that large portion of Western Australia? The diversity of interests in that portion of the State, the special conditions under which they carry on their industrial propositions, which are not applicable to the southern portions, demand that they should have special representation. The pearling industry in itself is an industry which very few hon. members understand.

The Premier: There are very few Britishers in it nowadays.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I believe that unfortunately all the white divers are dead. But the pearling industry is an industry of great moment to Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Who gets the benefit of it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The whole country gets the benefit. It gets just as much benefit from that trade almost as from the timber trade, more, if one takes the quantity of stuff that is imported and exported.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many taxpayers work in that industry?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why does not the hon. member consult the *Statistical Register*, or apply to Mr. Frazer who compiles these returns? If he cannot get the information from him he can refer to the Commonwealth Statistician. I have pointed out the importance of this pearl-

ing industry, and the special circumstances under which it is carried on, circumstances which, I venture to think the hon. member has no knowledge of. The cattle growing industry is one of far more importance to this State than some hon. members give it credit for being.

Mr. O'Loughlen : It is better for the country than pearling.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It is difficult to make comparisons, and I think the hon. member might find there is a bigger direct revenue from the pearling and those who subsist on it, than from the cattle industry. The pastoral industry is an enormous one. Who gets the benefit out of that ?

Mr. O'Loughlen : The State gets some.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Of course it does. It is in a few hands, and does not employ a great amount of labour, and yet it is a very valuable industry to any country. The industries I have mentioned are special industries which require special attention at the hands of this Parliament, and rather than reduce the representation of that portion of the State which is the home of these industries, we ought to see that it is either maintained or increased.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Will you give special representation to the timber industry ?

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member is an emblem of it himself. He is the special representative; he is the one man in this country who has been singled out for that great honour of being the special representative of only one industry. I do not want to labour this Bill much further. It is a small Bill which contains a very considerable amount of poison within its four corners. There are objections, and the main objection to-day is, first of all, that the Government of the day are going to appoint the commissioners. If we are going to have commissioners, and the Bill is required at all, let the commissioners be stated here in the Bill, and let us know who they are going to be. Three commissioners were appointed by the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Premier : They were never appointed by the Commonwealth Parlia-

ment; they were appointed by the Government.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The three commissioners are appointed from time to time by the Commonwealth Government, and everyone knows the unseemly wrangles that have taken place over their decisions. The Federal *Hansard* shows the charges that have been made over the decisions of the commissioners, even in regard to Western Australia. If the Government are going to appoint commissioners, of course the Government are going to instruct the commissioners, and within the four corners of the Bill, which I point out are fairly wide, these commissioners are going to carry out the instructions of the Government who appoint them. In the Commonwealth they have deemed it necessary to introduce an amending measure but I do not think it has been carried. It will however be carried when the people get a chance of remodelling the Senate. This measure provides that a justice of the High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court of the State shall be the sole commissioner with regard to fixing the boundaries of electorates.

Mr. O'Loughlen : If we appoint three judges, will that suit you ?

Hon. FRANK WILSON : So far as that is concerned, it would be all right. There are I notice no provisions in the Bill for anyone to see what is going in. We are to have a system of secrecy.

Mr. O'Loughlen : You did not let us see what was going on.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : We are to have that secrecy which hon. members so strongly accused us of; but this has all been decided by caucus, I have not the slightest doubt. I do not know whether the Premier has noticed the conditions, but in the Commonwealth Electoral Act it is provided that before reporting on a distribution of any State into divisions, the commissioner shall cause a map with a description of the boundaries to be exhibited in the post office in the proposed division, and he shall invite the public attention thereto by advertisement in the *Gazette*, and it also goes on to provide that objections and suggestions in writing may be lodged with the commissioner

not later than 30 days after the appearance of the advertisement in the *Gazette*, and the commissioner shall consider all suggestions before making a report. These are necessary provisions and I commend them to the consideration of the Premier and the Attorney General for inclusion in this Bill. It is necessary that everyone who wishes to do so before a report is finally decided upon, shall be able in writing to give evidence as to the objections or inequalities in the proposals that are to be included in the report. There is another strong objection inasmuch as our friends opposite have endeavoured to hide the cloven hoof of this measure, but it is apparent in Clause 4 when closely examined, that they want to ignore altogether what is known as community or diversity of interest. Community or diversity of interest has to be given consideration in fixing boundaries of electorates and in order that there might be no mistakes about it the words "in the order stated" have been inserted in the clause. The instruction to the commissioners is that in making the division, consideration shall be given by them to (1) means of communication and distance from the capital; (2) physical features, and (3) community or diversity of interest in the order stated. I say that is absolutely wrong, and it is an attempt to keep strictly to the quota which by interjection my friend wished to imply will not be adhered to. Community or diversity of interest is the main consideration.

Mr. Bolton: It was with you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is the first consideration in the Commonwealth Act. It is also the first consideration in the Queensland Act and in any redistribution of seats measure introduced ever since there has been responsible Government. We must admit at once that community of interest must be considered when we are deciding upon representation. It is idle to have a division divided against itself and to have one-half of the people pulling against the other half. We cannot get effective consideration given by any Government under such circumstances and to think that timber hewers and workers

can assimilate with farmers, fruit-growers, and agriculturists is absurd. Their interests are not identical and to say that the hide-bound, caucus-ridden members of trades unions who have already bled the coffers of the State for the erection of their building, can have community of interest with agriculturists and business people is also absurd. With all due respect to my friends opposite, I say that they are out on a gerrymandering expedition; they are out to utilise the labour population of the electorate of the member for Forrest in order to disfranchise the more sparsely populated agricultural centres adjoining, and further again, they are out to centralise in the metropolitan area; they are to have the tradesmen in the industrial centres of the metropolitan area a swaying power throughout the whole State.

Mr. Bolton: Why speak of them with such contempt?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not; I am speaking of hon. members opposite with contempt, at least those members who are supporting this measure.

The Premier: Your contempt would be a compliment.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, accept it as such.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Where would a tradesman be if it were not for the shackled trades unions?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The tradesmen then would all be Liberals, they would be enlightened and free, they would have the advantage of their individual effort and enterprise and would rise to the highest positions in the land and in turn become employers of labour, and then the hon. member would be able to get a job.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I would do just as well as you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have pointed out that community of interest should be the first consideration. The Attorney General has acknowledged that in the North-West with regard to community of interest special consideration must be given under special circumstances. Lastly, I am absolutely opposed to this question of fixed representation on a pop-

ulation basis. I maintain that the small population in the agricultural areas on which the progress and prosperity of our country depends very largely, as hon. members have admitted on many occasions, demands greater representation than the congested population of towns and cities, and I say at once instead of putting this in the permissive sense, the margin that is allowed above or below should be fixed. We should fix a certain increased quota in the city above the agricultural areas, and a certain decreased quota in the far North-West where we cannot get the necessary numbers of electors, so that the commissioners shall not be swayed by party or influenced by the Government. I have said all I wish to say on this measure. It does not appeal to me as being necessary at the present juncture. I have shown that the present conditions are fair and equitable notwithstanding the condemnation which hon. members are ashamed of.

Mr. Bolton: No fear.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have shown that this Bill in its incidence is designed to give our friends opposite increased power when the next general elections come about.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): The leader of the Opposition is very unhappy in his reference to this matter because he endeavoured by this measure to justify the Redistribution of Seats Act for which his Government were responsible.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have I not done it?

The PREMIER: Not at all, the hon. member has only justified the attitude adopted by his party, but which was not endorsed by the people.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Wait until next October.

The PREMIER: The main difference between the Bill now before the House and that introduced by our friends is that the people shall decide the question of representation, and that the Government with the assistance of their supporters shall not decide for the people how they shall be represented in the future. The leader of the Opposition quoted the num-

ber of electors in different electorates and then arrived at the conclusion that we had decided that the electoral boundaries should be in certain directions. I do not know how the hon. member would arrive at that unless, of course, he is deliberately attempting to mislead the House or else he has been misled himself. The hon. member knows that we have provided that for the purpose of arriving at a quota the number of remaining electorates after excluding the three North-West electorates shall be divided into the total number of electors on the roll and that that shall be the quota. But we are giving the right to vary that quota by one-fifth more or one-fifth less according to certain set definite principles. If these definite principles are wrong and we are guilty of doing something that is unjust, unfair or scandalous, as the hon. member asserts, then he is hurling a pretty severe accusation against Governments in the Eastern States. A Queensland Liberal Government introduced an almost similar measure: a Liberal Government of the Commonwealth some years ago did the same, and except where they are hard pressed, as in South Australia and as they are in Victoria, Liberal Governments have attempted to arrange the boundaries on much the same lines, but when they see the writing on the wall, when they believe they are likely to be faced with a minority at a general election they adopt a different principle altogether.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that so in Victoria?

The PREMIER: It is.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What nonsense, it is not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said exactly the same thing before the 1911 elections. He would not be told what the calamity was going to be, and he will probably find a surprise in store for him when the next elections come about.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It will be you who will get the surprise next October.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will not be back here to answer for some of the statements he has made. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) will be here. It will be somewhat difficult to

remove him from the pedestal he has placed himself on. The leader of the Opposition said that the Bill has proved that we were not just or fair to the then Government when we circulated untrue statements during the 1911 election campaign. I have with me a copy of the speech I delivered in the Mechanics' Institute which gave so much concern to the hon. member when he returned, the morning it appeared in the Press, from his trip round the world. What I said was reported in this way—

He desired to refer to a piece of legislation which for the moment was of vital importance, namely, the Redistribution of Seats Bill. He had there a plan showing the new Collie electorate. The adjoining electorate was Sussex, the district represented by the Premier. His Majesty the King had apparently heard of this measure, for he gave Mr. Wilson the right to add the letters C.M.G. after his name, which I am told, means Chief Minister for Gerrymandering. No one would deny that a redistribution of seats was necessary to adjust some of the anomalies which had grown up since the last measure was passed, but the astounding feature of the whole thing was that when the Bill was before Parliament the Premier asserted that the matter had nothing to do with the public.

Imagine a Redistribution of Seats Bill right on the eve of a general election to adjust the electoral boundaries to provide better representation of the people in Parliament having nothing to do with the people! The report continues—

Mr. Wilson would have been nearer the mark if he had stated that it had all to do with the retention of Ministerial office.

The Ministry were introducing a Bill, not for the purpose of securing a better expression of the will of the people, but in the interests of remaining in office against the will of the people. That was their object. They attempted to accomplish it, but the people were not so ignorant as to what was against their own interests that they would make a following even in

those districts which he particularly desired to retain. What we are concerned about is the principle that at each general election, so far as it is possible, we shall have a Government returned with a majority of the people in their support. I have claimed in Opposition, and I claim it here, that no Government have a right to exist, to legislate for the people, to administer the affairs of State unless a majority of the people are in accordance with their policy. Any attitude adopted by a Government because they happen to have a majority in Parliament which will prevent a majority of the people from controlling the affairs of the State, is detrimental to the interests of those people. And the people were plainly told that from every platform, with the result that disaster took place at the first opportunity. Now this report continues—

If there was anything in democracy it was that the majority for the time being should not decide how the majority in the future should act. While the Labour party were twitted by the newspapers with being somewhat premature in accusing the Government of gerrymandering, they had proved that they had a better knowledge of the members of the present Government than the newspapers had. The Bill had undoubtedly been introduced for the purpose of gerrymandering the electoral boundaries, and the statement was proved by the arrangement of the boundaries of the Sussex and Collie electorates. They had transferred 360 of the Premier's opponents from Sussex to Collie, and had brought into Sussex from the Collie district 260 of those who had supported the Ministerial candidate for Collie at the last election. Mr. Wilson hoped to retain the Sussex seat, but he (Mr. Seaddan) thought that even the people there would not be likely to stand such an interference with their rights as citizens.

They deliberately took out a portion of the Sussex electorate and placed it in Collie. They chipped and chopped about, until somebody said that if Mr. A. A.



Wilson, the member for Collie, was to attempt to get from one part of his electorate to another in a buggy without overstepping the electorate, he would have his wheel taken off trying to squeeze through. And it was all done, we were told, for the purpose of securing community of interests which clearly, on that occasion, was synonymous with security of tenure of office. The report continues—

In that measure Ministers had been exceedingly cautious. All of them, with the exception of Mr. Daglish, had given themselves pocket boroughs, and five of them had only small quotas of 2,040 electors each. In order to retain their positions on the Treasury benches, Ministers had first given consideration to their own interests, and had deliberately cut out four seats (three of which were represented by Labour men), and added them to districts in which they hoped to have a better chance of success. The Labour party held that the question of the arrangement of electoral boundaries should be removed altogether from party or political considerations. The question was one which really concerned the people first and last, and the tactics of the Government were neither honourable nor just in their method of dealing with it. His party proposed to repeal the measure if given an opportunity, and to introduce a Bill providing for the appointment of a non-party board of commissioners, whose duty would be to arrange the boundaries on the lines of the Queensland and Commonwealth measures. No party which had a majority in the House had the right to frustrate the free expression of the people's will. Under the Bill in question it was actually possible for 48,000 electors to return 26 members, a majority, and for 94,000 electors to return 24 members, a minority, this being a state of affairs that was not to be tolerated for a moment in any democratic country.

These were some of the truisms, not untruths, circulated with such good effect in the campaign of 1911. One might easily follow the hon. member and say

that there was no need for the measure, that we could appoint commissioners. But the hon. member will appreciate the fact that in consequence of the nature of his Act we declared that in future redistributions this new procedure shall be adopted. We propose as far as possible to prevent any Liberal party which may be for a moment returned to the Treasury bench from again attempting to frustrate the will of the people in the direction they did on the previous occasion. We have not done anything in the way of arranging electoral boundaries up to date. We merely ask Parliament to sanction the appointment of three commissioners who shall proceed on definite lines. The hon. member made no reference to the principles contained in the measure except to touch upon the order in which these considerations should be taken into account by the commissioners. Again I assert that from the point of view of proper representation in Parliament, the powers there given to the commissioners are just and fair. The hon. member can attempt by figures to prove that we propose to give undue representation to any one part of the State, but he is not in a position, any more than are Ministers themselves, to show what the commissioners will do.

Mr. George: You have a pretty good idea though.

The PREMIER: I have not the slightest idea as to who will be appointed commissioners. Even if I had it would not matter. We do not permit the Government to appoint partisan commissioners. We say that the Governor shall appoint three commissioners and that these commissioners shall report to Parliament, and the Government will have nothing further to do with the redistribution. After these officials have been appointed all that the Government can do is to wait until the commissioners bring down their report; and we pledge ourselves to bring in a Bill to give effect to the recommendations in that report. We remove from the Government the right to arrange any electoral boundaries except those of the North-West, and the North-West is excluded for specific purposes. We have

excluded it from being considered under the Bill because—

Mr. McDonald: You will have separation in a few years.

The PREMIER: Perhaps it would be a good thing for the North.

Mr. George: But you will appoint these commissioners.

The PREMIER: They will be appointed by proclamation published in the *Gazette* and the hon. member will have full opportunity of discussing the work of these commissioners when they report to Parliament. It is provided that the commissioners shall be appointed by the Governor. The object of this is to prevent any future Government from naming commissioners under this measure. I was not particular about that clause being inserted because I believe the day when a Liberal Government will be in power is so far off that the clause is not necessary. I hold that before that day we may have found some other method of representation of the people, and it may not be necessary to have either the Assembly or the Council. The hon. member made reference to the quotas arrived at by his Government, for which he said they took full responsibility. I am not desirous of taking a responsibility of a similar nature. The responsibility rested with the Government, it is true, but the people were so disgusted with the action of the Government that the Government came back with their forces scattered. Let us for a moment go back to the quotas as arrived at by our friends opposite and compare them with the proposal we have in the measure. I am not in a position to say how many electors will be in each of these electorates, because we would have to sit down and consider very carefully, as the commissioners will be called upon to do just how the conditions laid down in the Bill will affect the quota in each of the electorates; but this I will say, that if the commissioners are imbued with even common sense they will see it is an instruction to them that if an electorate is in handy touch with the seat of government they will be expected

to provide that electorate with almost the maximum quota allowed under the measure in accordance with the number of electors on the printed rolls. On the other hand it will be an instruction to the commissioners that in the more remote parts of the State they shall be guided as nearly as possible by means of communication. This does not imply merely railway facilities, but the opportunity of bringing matters under the notice of the Government; and the more inconveniently an electorate is situated, the more necessary is it that it should have a lower quota than those in proximity to the seat of Government. Personally I have expressed the opinion that we are here to legislate in the interests of humanity.

Mr. McDonald: Does that mean excluding the North-West?

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

The PREMIER: We are making special provision for the North-West. What I want to explain is that while we have made special provision, personally I hold that when we legislate and administer the affairs of State, we do it with a set object, and that is the interest of manhood and womanhood and not the interest of sheep, cattle, pearls, or timber. If we did do that where would it land us from the point of view of representation in Parliament? We cannot fix an electorate in any part of the State where there is complete community of interest. Take a mining district. In a mining community all trades are represented. Would hon. members suggest that because one trade is a little more important than another, we should give special representation, say, to the engineers, and wherever there is an engineer put him on the roll and say that that engineer is entitled to special representation. Or, on the other hand, take a farming community. In every farming district there are little towns which depend for their success on farming operations. But the people residing in the towns are not farmers, and their interests, both from an ad-

ministrative and legislative point of view, are absolutely apart.

Mr. George: No.

The PREMIER: I say yes. The farmers of this State have suffered more through oppression by men who have carried on business in the towns than from any one else.

Mr. Male: Pooh!

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows all about it because he is in close touch with farming operations out in the ocean. Every hon. member knows that in the past it was the men standing between the producers and the consumers, that is to say the men who are carrying on business operations in the towns and cities, who have been actually preventing the farmer from getting the full results of his labours.

Mr. Moore: No.

The PREMIER: Of course the hon. member cannot see it because he is carrying on operations both as a farmer and as a storekeeper, and he, of course, would not do anything to hurt himself. The hon. member knows very well that in every part of the world it has long since been appreciated that the man who is toiling on the land has been oppressed not by the labourer but by the man who is selling his product, or selling him the necessary machinery and other things for the purpose of carrying on his farming operations. That man may reside in a farming constituency, and so I say we cannot have complete community of interest in any part of Western Australia, unless we give every artisan, every farmer, every pastoralist, and every pearler special representation on that basis.

Mr. Taylor: What would you do with the shearers; put them in with the pastoralists?

The PREMIER: Our friends opposite would not give the shearers a vote. They treat the shearer and the inmates of the Old Men's Home on the same basis. That is what our friends opposite think of community of interest. The community of interest of the shearers is only the same as the community of interest of the inmates of the Old Men's Home and the lunatic asylum.

Mr. Wisdom: Then why do you mention community of interest in the Bill.

The PREMIER: We make it the last consideration, and it does not affect the quota.

Mr. Wisdom: But you say community of interest does not exist.

The PREMIER: I say that it cannot be attained in the direction that the leader of the Opposition desires, unless we pick out the different trades and occupations throughout the State and give them all special representation.

Mr. George: You cannot do that.

The PREMIER: I am not doing any more than setting out in this measure a definite principle and an instruction to the commissioners to submit a report for consideration, not by the Ministry but by Parliament. On the last occasion when these figures were submitted by the then Attorney General (Mr. Nanson) it was claimed that the Government were giving representation on a low quota in certain districts because the population was increasing at such a rate that in a very short period those districts would be up to the quota which the then Government considered a correct one. How has that panned out in practice? Here we have what are known as the Midland districts, comprising Moore, Irwin, and Greenough, with a quota of 1,466. The electorate of Moore is only a few miles from the metropolitan area; in fact the boundary is within 9 miles of the metropolitan area, and the most distant part is somewhere this side of Toodyay. Means of communication are fairly good, the people there have a daily mail, and they have a fair opportunity of bringing their wants under the notice of the Administration for the time being. Yet they are given representation for 1,466 electors.

Mr. George: They are good ones.

The PREMIER: I am not saying they are not as good as electors in any other part of the State. They are equally as good but no better. Although some of us follow different occupations in life, each occupation is as valuable as the other, and I have told the farmers

when addressing them that whilst we require the farmer we also require the mechanic. Without the mechanic the farmer could not carry on his farming operations, so that while he is valuable as a farmer the mechanic is equally as valuable as a citizen. And the farmer has no more right to representation in making the laws of the State than has the mechanic. The leader of the Opposition may sneer just as much as he likes at the artisan and industrial classes in towns and cities, but I claim the industrial classes are worthy of as much consideration as any other section of the community. I was saying that the electorate of Moore had a quota of 1,400, Irwin 1,400, and Greenough 1,600, and it was claimed that they would increase until within a few years they would have fair quotas in comparison with other parts of the State.

Mr. Gill: What was Murray-Wellington?

The PREMIER: It was 1,700. Let me deal with some of the electorates that had small quotas. The enrolment for Irwin on the 3rd October, 1911, was 1,622, and now the roll shows a total of 1,661. It is making such rapid progress that it has increased its numbers by 39. Turn now to Katanning. When the roll was made up after the last Redistribution of Seats Bill was passed the electors in that district totalled 2,472; now they are 2,538, an increase in over two years of 100. The Moore electorate in 1911, just before the election, had 2,425; the latest Moore roll shows 2,327, or 100 less, and yet those districts were allowed a small quota in order to provide for rapid increase in electoral population in the near future. Pingelly had 2,194 and now has 2,182, or 12 less. Sussex had 2,256 and now has 1,695, or 561 less.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That electorate has a great future behind it.

Member: Who represents it?

The PREMIER: I do not know any one who represents it at present, but I know somebody who misrepresents it. This is evidence of the truth of the statements circulated throughout the country about the increase that must take place in

districts where low quotas were provided. Toodyay in 1911 had 3,494 and now has 3,499, or an increase of five in 2½ years. Wagin had 2,103 and now has 2,195, an increase of 90. York had 2,588 and now has 2,559, or 29 less. Beverley had 1,707 and now has 1,765, or 58 more than in 1911. Those are some of the electorates arranged by our predecessors for the purpose of giving fair representation to the people of the country. Of course I will admit that the hon. member for Sussex was ill-advised to make reference at such length to the Bill that his Government introduced. The sooner it could be forgotten the better it would be for them.

Mr. George: There is nothing to forget.

The PREMIER: It is well remembered by the people and it will always be remembered by them to the discredit of the last Government.

Mr. George: The people were blind then and they can see now.

The PREMIER: When that Bill was passed they were blind but that opened their eyes and they were able to see, and they will continue to see just as well as they did on that occasion.

Mr. George: Wait till the next election.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not worry, except from a selfish point of view, about what will happen at the next general election. If he is returned it will not be necessary for him to change his seat in the House for some years to come. I am not going to pursue this matter any further, more than to say that this is not the last word on the redistribution of electoral boundaries. As a matter of fact it is only a foundation, but, in my opinion, it is a solid foundation and one that will bear inspection. It is not one that requires the calling of caucus together every week for a period of five months. It is not one that requires the calling of officials from the different departments in order to get them to alter the arrangements in order to save the faces or seats of some of the Government supporters. As a matter of fact we are not in a position to know how the commissioners will arrange the

boundaries, but we are prepared, in accordance with our policy, to allow the commissioners to arrange the boundaries as they think fit and we will introduce a measure based on their report for the consideration of Parliament, and whatever may be the result of such report we always exist as a party on the distinct understanding that unless our policy is acceptable to the people we do not desire it to be put into operation. For my own part I will not for a moment tolerate sitting on the Treasury bench, attempting to legislate—it is only attempting at the present time, thanks to another place—attempting to legislate or administrate against the will of the people; but in spite of all the opposition that can be brought against us, either here or elsewhere, the Labour party have come into Parliament with a definite object in view, and that object is, not so much to consider the wool on the sheep's back, or the obtaining of pearl from the ocean, but to make the conditions of the people better than they were when we came here, and unless we can accomplish that we have no right to remain on the Treasury bench.

Mr. George: Nor has any party.

The PREMIER: That is so; but if we do not make a move forward owing to the conditions prevailing at the present time, the advent of the Labour Administration has prevented the reverse from occurring. The hon. member and the Opposition may at different times and in divers places assert that they are in Parliament to assist the masses of the community, but all history teaches those who will stop to read, that the so-called Liberals of to-day are the confusionists of yesterday and exist in the interest of the privileged few, and no measure can come before this Chamber unless every clause that affects the interests of the privileged few is carefully scrutinised and strongly opposed. It is useless for them to assert that they stand for the primary producers. Their actions right through the piece have been opposed to such, and will continue until such time as the party known as the Liberals will be non-existent. They are approaching that state to-day; they can

appreciate the fact that there is a ghost in the locker, and when they get an opportunity they play off against it. I am not concerned as to what is likely to eventuate from a rearrangement of the electoral boundaries as we suggest. We desire to introduce a method which will provide for the people as near as practicable under existing conditions fair representation in Parliament, and I claim that the proposals in this measure are in that direction; whereas the method of our predecessors was in exactly the opposite direction. I want to claim, moreover, that the fact that a person is residing in Perth to-day and next year happens to reside in an agricultural district does not make him a more valuable citizen so long as he is accomplishing what was within his reach when he was residing in the capital. The policeman who is to-day residing in Perth is of as much value as though he were residing in one of the out-back districts. But the only reason why we consider that those in the out-back districts should have extra representation is because they do not have the same facilities to bring their grievances under the notice of the Administration. I have instanced the policeman only; the same argument applies to all others. That is why we provide, in arriving at the quota, that while the industrial classes in our towns, who are just as essential to the progress of the State as the man farming on the land, shall have fair representation in Parliament, they shall not have such representation as will allow them to unduly influence the legislation or administration of the day. On the other hand, we want to give to the man who is removed to some remote distance from the capital, fair representation so that he may bring his wants under the notice of the Administration; but we do not want to give him sufficient representation to permit him to prevent the others in the community from obtaining what is theirs by right. The goldfields electors of the State are unanimous in the direction of asking for certain legislation; there is no division among them; yet, notwithstanding this fact, owing to pocket boroughs in some of the farming districts and other parts of the State and

to the formation of these pocket boroughs into provinces, which elect members to another place the will of the goldfields electors has been thwarted year after year.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And plural voting.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is another evil. We are not here for pleasure, but with a definite object, and plural voting will be battled with when the proper time arrives. If it is not dealt with effectively and the people of the State will not support our attitude we will be prepared to go over to the Opposition side of the House. So far as the Assembly is concerned, our object is to give proper representation to those congregated in our towns who are valuable assets to our State as well as the man on the land, and at the same time to give fair representation to the man toiling in the back blocks so that everyone will have an opportunity to bring his wants under the notice of the Administration and the Parliament of the country, and as far as it lies in the power of the Administration and the Parliament get their grievances adjusted. There is no method I know of which can be fairer or more just than the one we have introduced in this measure. Whether the recommendations of the commissioners will be accepted by this House or not, the fact remains that, with these definite objects in view I believe the commissioners can so arrange the electoral boundaries as to give proper representation to the people and will remove from the control of the party who may be in a majority the right to thwart the will of the people when it looks as if they have lost the confidence of a majority of the electors. I commend this measure to the House, and I think it will commend itself to the country at large.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I can certainly say, so far as the Premier is concerned, that he has not beaten about the bush in any shape or form, but has made his intentions and those of his party perfectly clear for those who like to study them. Whether we can agree that his views are just, and just in the interests of the whole of the communities of Western Australia is another

matter. Those who have heard the speech of the Premier can come to no other conclusion than that this Bill is introduced by the Government with the intention that it can be so worked as to ensure their full return at the next election, and ignore the interests which have made this State, and which have previously received consideration. The Premier likes plain dealing, and he will get it from me.

The Premier: We never get straight dealing from you.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier has never got crooked dealing from me.

Mr. Bolton: I do not think you believe what you have said.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member may not have been long enough in the country to remember that the people who were here in the early days and whose struggles were such that any of us, no matter to what party he belongs, can be proud of, were spread over a large area of Western Australia. Many of them have toiled for years and they are still poor and will remain poor to the end of their days. And the Premier would swamp these men; swamp their life work and give them no representation so long as he can get a measure through which will give him a sufficient number of votes to ensure his party being returned with a majority. I only want to put the position plainly before the House. If I am wrong hon. members on the Government side can correct me.

Mr. O'Loughlen: These old settlers are only human beings the same as the workers.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, and any man whether a worker, a farmer, or a capitalist is none the worse for remembering that those who differ from him have the same rights.

Mr. Bolton: The same rights?

Mr. GEORGE: As to the early days of Western Australia and the adoption of the electorates, I can only speak from information I have gathered in the course of my political life. The framers of the Constitution and of the Electoral Acts, endeavoured to see that these scattered communities should have representatives who could get into touch with the Ministry of the day and bring before them their just

needs and requirements so that some assistance could be given to them. It was recognised that this State was being held by a comparatively small population; it was being pushed forward by the work of that small population, and unless the Government of that time had been prepared to cherish and assist them their efforts would probably have failed. What is the position to-day? Owing to the breaking out of the goldfields and to the great extension of the timber industry, we have two large bodies of working men in the State. I am not speaking derogatorily of them; I have been one myself and am not ashamed of it. But we have these two large bodies of working men—one the miners and the other the timber workers. When the Bill was introduced by Sir Walter James to create the electoral division adorned by the hon. member for Forrest, it was felt that the timber workers were entitled, through their community of interest and distance, to representation. It was recognised that they needed one who was conversant with their requirements from A to Z, and who would place their requirements and the needs of the industry before the House. The mining industry of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie is another big community and has been treated on practically the same lines. The farmers represent another community, although, unlike the timber industry and the mining industry, the very vocation which the farmers have to follow causes them to spread over an enormous area of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Then why should one community of interest have greater representation than another?

Mr. GEORGE: I am not arguing for greater representation. What I intend to argue is that they shall have representation by men who understand their work, just as those engaged in the timber industry elect one of their own men, and those in the mining industry elect their own man to deal with such measures as the Mines Regulation Bill and other legislation with which hon. members who have not the same knowledge cannot deal as fairly as they otherwise would.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You think special representation is a great improvement.

Mr. GEORGE: I think where it can be carried out it should be done.

The Minister for Mines: Would you have it apply also to another place?

Mr. GEORGE: I am not dealing with another place. The Premier stated that that would be done later on, and it will then be time enough for me to deal with it. This basis of community of interest was the first consideration laid down by statesmen who preceded the hon. member opposite, and now we are told by the party in power—I am not disputing their right to say it and to act upon it so long as they have the power—but I differ from them in thinking that they are on the right course when they place community of interest, not in the forefront, but in the background of the considerations to be borne in mind by the commissioners. The Premier made reference to Liberal Governments in other States. This, if I may say so, is beside the question of this Bill. Perhaps my leader in his righteous indignation may have gone that way, and the Premier followed him. But we are legislating for Western Australia, and the Premier is advocating a principle in regard to which his party have nailed their colours to the mast. What they have done in other States does not concern me any more than what has been done in Timbuctoo or other places.

The Premier: Where is Timbuctoo?

Mr. GEORGE: That is a place in which, if the Premier happened to be there, he would have to learn another vocation than the one he is following now. The hon. member spoke about the farming community and with a great amount of assumed weight said that the farmers were one community who had suffered more from the people in the small towns than any other vocation in the State. I take that remark in this way: that in all these small towns there are one or two or more small storekeepers, and the meaning of the Premier is that these storekeepers have got the unfortunate farmers under their

thumb, and bleed them to death. That is what I presume the Premier means. I cannot take it any other way, because otherwise the Premier's argument would be absurd and have no weight whatever. Assuming that there were even ten store-keepers or men of that class—agents if you like—members like—in these towns, the proportion of their number to the farmers in the community outside would be practically not  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and then the Premier tells us because of that he must go and burst up, as it were, these farmers' constituencies because they are being pressed by an absolute minority of voters who could not affect an election in one way or the other, and who, if they voted at all, would not be so likely to vote for the Premier as they would be to vote for the other side. The Premier said that he had placed the farmer and the mechanic on the same basis, and attempted to show that if we differed from him on that we must either be insulting the farmer or insulting the mechanic. I say that each of them has his recognised position in the community, the farmer as tiller of the soil and producer of food, and the mechanic as a man whose business is to carry on the various mechanical work required for the farmer. But the proportion of mechanics in these individual towns is small indeed and not sufficient to warrant the Premier going to the absurdity of saying that if we studied community of interests we must have a member for the engineers, and so on. We know there is no system of representation obtainable in which every small community of interests can have its individual representation. But where we find the great majority of those forming these communities are following one avocation, these people should be able to choose their representative from their own ranks and their own calling. I have only a few more remarks to make in connection with this Bill. I am opposed to it. I am not going to say that the framers of the Bill, whoever took it in hand, did not honestly try from their point of view to give a Bill that would run square.

Mr. Carpenter: It is the first honest attempt at electoral redistribution.

Mr. GEORGE: It may be from the hon. member's point of view. I believe there has been a square attempt to make a Bill which will cover the principle enunciated by the party in power, but I do not agree with it. I have given some of my reasons and some more I hope to give in Committee. There is another question which I thought would have been brought forward in connection with this measure, and that is the question of proportional representation. This, as explained by the people who have to do with it, would mean a system of dividing the State into larger electorates, that is, each division having more members than one. The result would be that while the majority in an electorate would have their representation there would be a fair chance of the minority also having a representative. Take for instance the South-West division. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that that had been placed so that there would be five members, it would be hardly likely that the Labour party would win all these seats. Assuming for the moment that they even win three and that the other two seats are taken by their opponents, then there would be fairer representation than would be under this Bill, because, although there would be a majority for one party, Liberal or Labour, still the minority, who have their obligations and pay their share of taxation, would have some representation in this Chamber, and deserve to have it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have they not got it now?

Mr. GEORGE: Some of them have not.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which ones?

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member does not represent the farmers, for instance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And you do not represent the timber workers.

Mr. GEORGE: I wish I did.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You see it cuts both ways.

Mr. GEORGE: I was arguing that, assuming the South-West division or any other division was allotted five representatives, whether Liberal got three or



Labour got three, there is a large minority in every electorate, and if one party got three or even four and the other party got what remained, the minority would have representation, and that, I think, is a fair thing.

Mr. Turvey: Would it apply to both Houses?

Mr. GEORGE: If the hon. member wants to boil eggs he should not want to make omelettes in the same water at the same time, or he will make a mess of it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You must have visions of the future when you talk about eggs.

Mr. GEORGE: I was saying the minority do not get that representation under this Bill.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have not got it now.

Mr. GEORGE: I will say that too. I admit that in some instances they have not got it now. The hon. member is a living proof of that. He had a majority in his election, but there were a number of electors who felt they would have been glad if he retired for good, and they have no representation except that which the hon. gentleman, out of the generosity of his character, likes to give them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There were 800 in your electorate who opposed you.

Mr. GEORGE: Nevertheless they are all friends of mine, and we are quite happy. The point I want to make is that if a scheme can be brought forward by which the majority can have their representation and the minority can also have their representation, then I think we would get better and more just conditions than we have at present, or would have under this Bill. I hope this Bill will not pass; I am pretty sure it will so far as this House is concerned, but at the same time in Committee it may be possible to put a little more sweetness into it than I can see at the present time.

Mr. MONGER (York): I was waiting to hear some of those gentlemen who represent the North give expression to their feelings. In the absence of any statement from those hon. members one has a right to assume that they support

the measure introduced by the Attorney General.

Mr. Gardiner: You know they cannot.

Mr. MONGER: I cannot think they do; I cannot think they are going to allow a measure like this to go through, and to a large extent disfranchise one of the most important portions of this State. Not more than 13 years ago in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia there were six representatives for the northern portion of the State—

Mr. Gardiner: There were nine 14 years ago.

Mr. MONGER: With a population considerably less than that which is now represented by four members. The present Government, especially on the hustings some two years ago, made such a great cry about the intentions of the party to deal fairly with all sections and all portions of the State. If this Bill can be termed a legitimate desire to bring forward something in the interests of the whole of Western Australia, when their intention is plainly set down to reduce the small representation which now exists of about one-half of the whole State, I say that their former promises, by the introduction of such a Bill, are by no means being given effect to.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They promised this Bill.

Mr. MONGER: The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin, who keeps chipping in, can have a say by and by. We know he is here to represent an agricultural constituency, and we know he does not, but is a mere tool of the trades hall party of this State, and is dominated by that crowd. He has got no freedom himself—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member take his seat. I was going to wait until the hon. member had finished his tirade, but he seemed a long time about it. He must stand up and withdraw the remark that the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin is a tool of anybody.

Mr. MONGER: I withdraw that remark. He is not a tool of everybody—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member must withdraw unreservedly, without making any further reference.

Mr. MONGER: All right, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw. The hon. member is a splendid representative of the agricultural portion of this State—a splendid representative, and if I have ever made a deliberate misstatement in this House it was just now when I said he was a splendid representative of that party. I was referring, when the hon. member chipped in, to the intentions of the Government, from the wording of the Bill, to reduce so far as possible, the representation of the farming interests in this House. We are all aware that the Minister for Lands holds a farming seat in this Chamber, but we cannot expect any support from him in regard to this Bill. We know that he also will follow blindly the recommendations that no doubt have emanated, not from those in this Chamber, nor from the wishes of hon. members in this Chamber, but from the wishes of a section who rule the gentlemen who occupy seats to-day on the Treasury bench in this House. We know that the Minister for Lands, as a representative of the agricultural portions of this State, is going to throw in his lot and vote for this measure which has for its object a reduction of the members who represent an important section of the community, but we also know that if the Minister for Lands goes before the country as a representative of the farming community, there will be a vacancy on the Treasury bench after the next general election.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are a poor old prophet.

Mr. MONGER: I am perfectly certain that the Minister for Lands if he votes for this Bill will not be giving an expression to the wishes of those who returned him and placed him in the position he holds to-day.

The Minister for Lands: I am doing just what I told them I would do when I fought the election.

Mr. MONGER: I am very glad then that the hon. member's electors are prepared for the attitude he is going to adopt when the vote takes place on the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: They knew before they elected me.

Mr. MONGER: I only hope they will have another opportunity and that at an early date, and I am certain they will not fall into such a trap again and be misled and misrepresented by that hon. gentleman and by the misstatements which have emanated from so many hon. members who occupy seats on the Ministerial side of the House. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking some little time ago he referred to the lying statements made prior to the elections. There was no exception taken by the gentlemen on the Treasury benches to the remark. They admitted by their silence that there had been lying statements circulated then, and prior to the elections, when they spoke of gerrymandering. If the Bill passes this Chamber and does ultimately become law, I do not know what terms will be applied to the gentlemen who occupy seats on the Ministerial side when they next appear before the public.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We will allow the public to judge as they judged you.

Mr. MONGER: They were misled. Let us go to the country in due course but on the redistribution which was passed before. Let us go before the people under the same conditions as then, and we will see a very great difference in the personnel of this Chamber. I only hope that the Government will after due consideration withdraw this measure. I cannot for one moment think that the Attorney General is too well pleased with it. I look upon him as a fair man.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did he make some of those lying statements?

Mr. MONGER: No, but I daresay the hon. member who just interjected did. I look upon the Attorney General as being fair, and if it is his desire to be fair to the people, why not bring the whole thing down on to the one footing and let the whole of the country be represented on a population basis? Increased facilities should be given to the people of the North as well as to those who are in the out back mining centres. If the people in the sparsely settled agricultural areas are not entitled to consideration on a population basis, why should the people of the

North be given consideration, and if the Attorney General is sincere, and if his remarks apply to the sparsely settled portions of the agricultural and mining districts, they should apply to the sparsely peopled portion of the North. I do not think that is the intention of the Attorney General and, therefore, I ask him to bring forward and submit for the consideration of this House something which has a common object in view, and that is the treatment of the whole of the State on fair, reasonable, and equitable lines. I do hope that wiser principles will rule and that the Attorney General will not, like the rest of his colleagues, be led away by instructions from the Trades Hall.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Talk about lying statements; you are making them yourself when you say that.

Mr. MONGER: The member for Forrest will have an opportunity of replying, and I hope I will be in the Chamber when he does so. I can only hope in conclusion that such a Bill as has been submitted for our consideration will never become law, and I hope that the Government will decide to withdraw it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I have very few words to say in connection with the second reading of this measure, and in rising to speak I merely do so to partly assure the member for York that he need not worry so far as my attitude towards this measure is concerned, because when I contested the Avon constituency, they had from me there a perfectly candid statement of my political principles, and they were told very distinctly that it was on those principles that I was seeking election, and that I was not going to pander to them in any way in order to get into Parliament. I was particularly explicit in regard to my attitude on the question of the redistribution of seats. Some of my opponents, both personally and in the Press, tried to create an initial prejudice against me by quoting my attitude on the scandalous measure introduced in the session of 1911, and they asked the electors to put to me a query as to whether, if returned, I proposed to strike out the seat I was

seeking to represent, and which had been newly created under that particular measure. I then told them that I was in favour of an honest and straightforward measure for the redistribution of seats, free from malpractices on the part of any Government seeking to establish themselves in defiance of the will of the people, and on that principle I staked my claim for their support, and if they were not prepared to endorse that political principle, I had no desire to represent the constituency of Avon. I say that this measure is not only one which this Government should introduce, but it is a measure which should be supported by any Government seeking to secure a reputation for honesty of purpose above mere party political advantage, and it is introduced because this Government and their supporters believe that it should be above party considerations, and that it should, as far as possible seek to serve the interests of the people, and not any set of Ministers or any particular set of politicians. That the Bill is a good one is proved by the fact that a measure, practically on all fours with this, was introduced by Sir George Reid in the New South Wales Parliament so far back as 1893, and it has weathered all the changes of parties and all the storm and stress of political controversy in that State from that year to the present time, and the elections which will take place in New South Wales on the 6th of next month will be fought on a redistribution of seats brought into effect for that particular election on the basis of the Act which was passed in 1893. Queensland under Liberal administrations has followed in the wake of New South Wales. The redistribution of seats in Queensland is on a precisely similar basis, and there we have a State which, so far as distances and the alternation of a closely settled metropolitan population, with big widely scattered electorates with a sparse population, is practically on all fours with the position in Western Australia. This Bill seeks to secure by the work of independent commissioners, the redistribution of seats which will be based on certain well defined principles, and which will not be

arbitrarily drawn up by a Ministry for the time being in power, looking firstly to their own personal advantage, and, secondly, to the interests of the public generally. I want to disclaim any support for the theory that any body of electors in this State following a particular occupation are entitled to be treated on terms more favourably, as far as legislation is concerned, than any other section of the community. We all admit, because we know it is true, that the agricultural industry is of importance to the community, that it is an essential industry, but we know also that the farmer must have boots and clothes and farming implements, and that the maker of the boots and clothes is just as essential to his welfare as is the farmer in the production of food for the artisan, the bootmaker and tailor, and that those engaged in the agricultural industry are as much dependent for their success on the presence of large manufacturing populations or those engaged in other industries, as the industrial classes are dependent upon the agricultural producer. And it is not the duty nor the right of any Government to give preferential consideration to one section and to that extent to deny it to other elements of the community. As a matter of fact a purely agricultural population without those complementary sections of the community engaged in other occupations is generally a population which exists at a very low ebb indeed, which exists under circumstances which we do not desire to see repeated in this State. It is in those communities where a wise Government policy gives encouragement not only to agriculture but to all other industries that we see a community self-supporting, with all the facilities and necessities for production within its own borders and with its units engaged in varying trades and occupations all mutually complementary. I am not going to be a party to any proposals to give exclusive or preferential consideration to one section at the expense of another, and if this is essential to the holding of a seat in this House I do not desire to remain a member of Parliament on terms such as those. I say the Bill is necessary

because, in my opinion, if it is once adopted by the people of Western Australia no future Government will dare to revert to the condition of things which obtained in this State in 1911 and which has been brought into play in South Australia in the recent amendment of the Constitution there; and should they ever dare to depart from the principles laid down here or principles laid down on similar lines, and attempt to revert to a condition of things which allows a Ministry to defy and ignore the people, seeking themselves to constitute a redistribution of seats for merely party advantage, —if they ever dare to do that, then, as in 1911, it will mean the end of their political existence. As a representative of an agricultural constituency I cordially support the Bill because it is in absolute accord with principles I have held ever since I have been a member of the House, whether representing a mining or an agricultural constituency. When the seats cannot be redistributed on similar lines to these, or when I cannot be a representative on any other understanding than this, then I shall have no desire to represent an agricultural or any other constituency.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): Personally I would prefer to see a measure embodying a system of proportional representation introduced, and I hope that before many years have passed we will have proportional representation in this State, because I think that under it the people will have better representation and members will be returned on fairer conditions than is the case to-day. At the same time I intend to support the Bill whole heartedly for the reasons expressed by the Minister for Lands, namely, because I believe it is a fair Bill and because it embodies the principles upon which I was elected. I think every member remembers the great outcry that went through the State in 1911 when a Liberal Government adopted hole and corner methods of cutting the State up into constituencies to suit themselves. One result of that action was that I first went on the hustings and told the people of the district I represented that it was my in-

tention, if elected, and the intention of the leader of the party to appoint a commission of independent men free from political control to divide the State into electorates on something approaching a population basis with a variation of one-fifth above or below the quota. It is to me a matter of satisfaction to sit behind a Government so true to the principles outlined on the public platform. In this respect as in many other respects day by day we are engaged, as far as can be done by this Chamber, in doing absolutely what we promised to do at the time the Government were returned with such a triumphant majority to the Treasury bench. It is true that many of our measures have been blocked in an Upper House that dares to thwart the people's will, but I rejoice to think from the Premier's remarks this evening that before very long the Government are going to fight that conservative Chamber, and I hope they will carry the fight to a bitter finish and deal with that Chamber as the House of Lords has been dealt with in the Old Country. We have heard a number of statements from the leader of the Opposition and from the members for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) and for York (Mr. Monger) as to what will be the result of this measure. I venture to say the statements made are largely the product of the distorted imaginations of those hon. gentlemen; because it is clear the Bill is only one to appoint a commission to rearrange the boundaries of the State on a fair basis, and it is absurd for these gentlemen, before we know who will be appointed, to say what will be the result of the commissioners' recommendations. The remarks of the leader of the Opposition were certainly most unfair, most misleading, and in my opinion designed to deceive the people of Western Australia and particularly the residents of the agricultural districts. The leader of the Opposition in the figures he quoted spoke on the basis of the whole State being divided up into electorates containing equal numbers of electors, whereas it is clear from the Bill that a variation of one-fifth will be allowed. If the quota is 3,000, it is fair that the metropolitan electorates will have

approximately 3,600 electors each, whilst on the basis in the Bill the agricultural and outback electorates will have an average of about 2,400. As it is to-day, it is not the agriculturists as a community that received special consideration from the Wilson Government in regard to numbers of electors in each electorate; it was only the agriculturists in certain well known conservative districts that were specially favoured by that Government. As a result of their subdivisions of the State into electoral boundaries, we find to-day that the electorates of Avon and Williams-Narrogin, represented by the Minister for Lands and myself, respectively, where the people are progressive and up to date in regard to politics and other matters, in these two electorates we find that Avon has 3,071 electors and Williams-Narrogin 3,046. On the other hand, where the late Government thought the people were conservative they apportioned the seats on a very different basis in regard to the number of electors in each district, with the result that the Wagin electorate has 2,195 electors; Pingelly, 2,182, and Beverley—I need not remind hon. members that Beverley is closer to the seat of Government than the other electorates mentioned, and the people there are well established, having had railway facilities for a number of years and so have fewer requirements to put before the Government—Beverley has 1,765 electors on the roll, and there are also only 1,661 on the roll for Irwin.

The Minister for Lands: Williams-Narrogin and Avon each have more than Northam.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, more than the big populous town of Northam. It shows that the late Government did not extend consideration to the agriculturists as a body, but merely special representation to those they thought would return puppets to support the Liberal Government. Under the Bill the people of the agricultural districts, in common with those in mining and timber districts, will get fair and just representation, and that is all they are entitled to, while as a class the people of the agricultural districts will certainly get much fairer treatment

under the Bill than under the measure designed by the previous Government, which permitted the existence of the anomalies to which I have drawn attention. A glance at the list of electors on the roll for the various districts shows clearly that we must have some reform in our electoral law. The speech of the leader of the Opposition suggests, although I can hardly believe such a thing possible, that his friends and supporters in another place may interfere with this measure. If they do attempt to do so, I hope the Government will take this as the time to start out on a fight with the conservative property Chamber; because surely every member and every elector will admit that that conservative House has no right at all to interfere with a redistribution of seats for the Assembly, which certainly should be done on a popular basis as proposed by the measure. I wish to quote a few figures showing the anomalies that exist to-day in regard to population in the various electorates other than the metropolitan electorates and electorates on the Golden Mile. On looking at the list I find that the Menzies seat, which was specially cut out for the late Minister for Mines, contains only 1,321 electors. The Murray-Wellington seat contains 1,994 and Mount Margaret 1,870, and, on the other hand, we find that the Collie seat contains 3,528 electors, and the Forrest seat, which is less accessible than many of the agricultural districts, 3,504. Adjacent to the Forrest and Collie districts there is the district represented by the leader of the Opposition, and that hon. gentleman, in the course of his remarks this evening was particularly careful not to mention the fact that his electorate to-day contains only 1,695 electors. I venture to say there is a duty on the Government, and the present Government have recognised it by the introduction of this measure, to reform those glaring anomalies in regard to the representation of the people in this House. Other anomalies existing are Cue 1,544, Mount Leonora 2,117, and Beverley 1765, and I may be pardoned for again comparing those figures with the fact that in my own electorate there are 3,046 names already

on the roll, and I honestly believe that if a proper electoral canvass were made of that district the number of electors on the roll would be increased to at least 5,000. There are 5,000 people entitled to vote in that district, where there are many public works in progress, as compared with 1,765 in the adjacent agricultural district of Beverley. I congratulate the Government on having introduced this honest Bill, which is fair to the whole of the people of the State, in order to deal with the anomalies I have mentioned.

Mr. McDonald: It is not fair to the pioneers of the North-West.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is a point on which a little can be said later on by the hon. member. In regard to the one-fifth margin of variation, I am glad that the Government have adopted that because that provision already exists in regard to Federal elections, and it is provided by the Constitution that for the House of Representatives, Australia shall vote on a population basis with a difference in the number of electors of only one-fifth above or below the quota. Of course, that was accepted by the people of Western Australia and of all the States of the Commonwealth voting as separate electorates on a population basis. It was provided further that the States of Tasmania and Western Australia should never have less than five members, although they might not be entitled to that number in the House of Representatives on a population basis. In the same way this Government, recognising the isolation of the North-West, have provided that that portion of the State shall always have a special representation of three members, whether it is entitled to it on a population basis or not. In regard to the remarks of the member for York, I do not know that anything that hon. gentleman says deserves much consideration at my hands, or at the hands of the people of Western Australia. I think he is pretty well known.

Mr. Taylor: Enough said.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Enough said, as the hon. member interjects. But I do wish to remind the House that the member for York is a political relic of the days

when under the Forrest Administration 60 electors in East Kimberley were given the same representation in the Legislative Assembly as were 6,000 othersiders who lived on the East Coolgardie Goldfields about Kalgoorlie. As I said before, the member for York is a relic of a political period at which that condition of affairs existed. There was also at that time plural voting for the Legislative Assembly, and there was a number of gentlemen who had votes in 20 or 30 different electorates for the Legislative Assembly, because they happened to have a separate block of land in each of those Assembly districts. I am glad to say we have got past that stage, but I do not expect the member for York to keep pace with us. In conclusion, I congratulate the Government on this fair, just, honest measure which the Attorney General has so eloquently and ably introduced.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill, because I believe that it is the first attempt that has been made in Western Australia to put the representation on something like a fair basis. Hitherto we have had most unequal representation, and at the last redistribution of seats we had a distribution absolutely on what the then Government considered the political opinions of the people. We were told that community of interest was considered, but the only community of interest considered on that redistribution was how the people were going to vote in party politics, which, to my mind, is an entirely different proposition to representation according to actual community of interest. I claim that when the last word has been said somebody outside of Parliament, and apart from those who desire to get the seats, should have the distribution of them, for, after all, it seems altogether inadvisable, with the present state of human nature—we are hoping it will alter and we fully believe it will—to allow those who are trying to get the seats to map them out for themselves. Therefore, the appointment of commissioners must appeal to the people of Western Australia if it does not appeal to the Opposition. I just wish to make one or two comments on the Bill,

because there are some matters that I think could be dealt with differently. In regard to the laying out of the seats, I find that it is provided that the commissioners shall take into account community of interest. That could have been well left out of the Bill, for, after all, community of interest is absolutely undefinable so far as mapping out boundaries is concerned. There is absolute community of interest between every citizen of the State. Every West Australian citizen has a community of interest with each other citizen of the State. On the other hand, from that point down, they start to digress and it can be written down that we cannot find two individuals who have not a diversity of interests. So that the position generally is that we have all community of interests but each of us has a diversity of interest in relation to some other individual. Therefore I say, taking into consideration the absolute impossibility of putting into practice community of interest, it can be well left out of the Bill. The Premier when speaking, said that he could bring about community of interest if he put the whole of the engineers in Western Australia into one electorate and allowed them to return their quota of members. But he would not then have community of interest. Even amongst the engineers in various parts of the State there will be found a diversity of interest, and the same may be said of any other trade that can be mentioned. There is no possible doubt that there is a strong community of interest between pastoralists and the shearers. They both get their living from sheep, the one grows the sheep and the other shears them, and it is to the interests of both that there should be plenty of sheep in the country; and yet when political questions come into consideration I do not know of any two sections of the community who are more diametrically opposed to each other, although, as I say, on the question of actual community of interest in getting their living, the shearers and squatters should certainly be together. Therefore, I regret very much that the words "community of interest" have been used in the Bill at all.

I am of opinion that we will find later on it is better to leave out those words entirely and allow that the people of Australia, whatever their walk in life may be, have the interests of Western Australia at heart, and as West Australians we all have community of interest. In regard to the laying out of the electorates, my opinion is that allowing, as the Bill provides, for a larger number of electors in areas which are close to the capital and in districts which are easy of communication, and allowing greater representation to portions of the State which have not the facilities of representing their case to the Government—after allowing those considerations, the commissioners, having fixed the quotas they are going to allow for certain districts, should start at Fremantle, and map the country out into electorates as they get their quotas. Having mapped out South Fremantle with its quota they should go on to East Fremantle, get their quota there, thence to Claremont and Cottesloe, and so on. They would go up the Midland line marking out the electorates as they got their quotas there, then down the Great Southern and along the Eastern railway, working on the same method; and there could be no fairer way of distributing the votes in the State. Now I come to the question of representation and also the difficulties of people approaching the Government, and when we touch that question there comes into consideration one portion of this State, in area almost half, which at the present time returns only four members. In my opinion that portion of the State is absolutely entitled to retain its present representation, and I hope when we get into Committee we will carry an amendment allowing the four seats in the North-West portion of the State to be retained. I have no intention of discussing that question on the second reading; but there are one or two points I would like to make now. We have to admit that the North-West portion of this State, in area, comprises almost one-half of the State. We have to allow that to thoroughly represent the people in an outlying district it is necessary for the member to have a fairly

good local knowledge of the district and of the people. Taking the area at about 400,000 square miles of country, I think the House will recognise that it is utterly impossible for a member to represent a greater area than is represented by the four members for the North-West. Of course there is the proposition we are always up against, that we have a vote on other questions; but I do not think that outweighs the absolute right of the people, the pioneers of this country, to have some genuine representation, not only in Parliament but in the capital of the State from which they are governed. They have to obey all the laws: they have many transactions and a member from the North-West must realise, and I think the people of the State will realise, that that portion of the State which is undoubtedly a valuable and a great revenue-producing portion, is entitled to very generous consideration at the hands of this House when it comes to a question of representation. When the question of granting autonomy to Western Australia was under consideration, the North-West was indicated as presenting a very serious difficulty, and it was only on consideration that the North-West received fair representation that the Home Government granted autonomy to this State. The Federal Constitution one of the most democratic in the world, formulated by one of the most democratic conventions we have known, provided not an equality of votes, but that smaller States in population should have a given representation, and on the same grounds I claim that the unpopulated portion of this State is justly entitled to a better proportion of representation than parts of the State which are more thickly populated and which are easier to populate. It is no very great credit to a person to settle in Perth; but we must have a good deal of admiration for those who go up into the tropics and settle in a part of this State which badly requires settlers, and in which only the strongest and best of men can settle. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I hope an amendment will be accepted, allowing the re-



presentation at present enjoyed by the North-West to be retained. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury): I agree in some measure with the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin when he said he would have much preferred to have seen a Bill introduced providing for proportional representation. It is quite possible that the time is not yet ripe for the introduction of such a Bill; but there cannot be any question that when it does arrive it will be beneficial to Western Australia in many respects. I have looked forward to the time when such a condition of affairs may arise in the hope that some of the tendencies towards parish pumpism may have disappeared, and there will be a better opportunity—

Mr. Taylor: The parish pump has no representation in this House.

Mr. THOMAS: I think the hon. member is reflecting on the electors of Bunbury if he suggests that they are advocates of the parish pump. I regret that so much has been done to pander to inclinations of that description, which are certainly subversive of the best aspirations of politicians. I have looked forward with longing to the time when an hon. member could represent a constituency on great political principles only. Possibly it may come some day, and when it does, possibly we shall have a better race of politicians; not that the present lot are not all that can be possibly desired. To judge of the benefits that may be derived from the system of proportional representation we have only to look at Tasmania where the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Ministry both represent the same constituency. There can be no question as to the benefits derived there in the way of roads and bridges, because whatever is done, credit is given alike to the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government. As such a thing is not possible in Western Australia for the present it is hardly worth while discussing it farther. I compliment the Minister for Lands upon the excellent and manly utterance he made this evening. I listened to the hon. gentleman with very great pleasure indeed. He made one of

the finest speeches which it has been my privilege to hear in this House. He touched a great question in the manner in which it should be dealt with, and showed to-day, as he always has done in the past, that he is prepared to stand and fight for principles and not for paltry benefits which may be derived by himself for the time being. The redistribution of seats is the point of view from which every hon. member should regard this measure. If we are to go on indefinitely considering measures of this description from the point of view of how they will affect our own paltry positions as hon. members, we will never do anything worthy of or creditable to this Parliament. Surely there must come a time in the existence of politicians when the good of the country, the thing which is just and fair and right, will stand quite above the interests of individuals. Realising the fact that this question was fought so bitterly in the last Parliament, and that the injustices of the Redistribution of Seats Act were brought so prominently before the people, and that the verdict given by Western Australia was so crushing and emphatic, one would have thought that every member of the Opposition, when the opportunity came, would have gladly embraced it to give expression to the plainly displayed wish of the people. Every member of the party supporting the Government when on the public platforms prior to the last elections, told the people that if returned to power a Bill would be introduced embodying these principles.

Mr. McDonald: They also promised special representation to the North-West.

Mr. THOMAS: I am in accord with the hon. member to this extent, that they should retain their present representation at the very least.

Mr. Elliott: They also promised to repeal the salary bill.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member newly arrived from Geraldton has broken out in a fresh place. Exactly what the salary bill might have to do with the just representation of Western Australia is something of a mystery to me.

Mr. Elliott: It is a bit awkward.

Mr. THOMAS: Perhaps when the hon. member speaks he will be able to explain the connection between these two important matters.

Mr. Elliott: One of your promises.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member for Murray-Wellington introduced a very discordant element; he laid a charge against the leader of the Government that this Bill was introduced solely to secure at the next elections the return of the Labour party.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: No one can tell how the electorates will be divided.

Mr. THOMAS: We are accustomed to these charges being thrown across the floor of this House, possibly a little more frequently than they should be; but whatever one's political opinions may be, whatever side of the House one may sit on, there are times when common justice prompts one to speak the truth. There is no fair critic, I do not care where he comes from or what brand of political opinions he may espouse, who can say there is any ulterior motive underlying this Bill. There may be faults of degree; there may be details that might be expanded in some direction or other that possibly may do greater justice to the people, such as the detail that one of the hon. members for the North-West has mentioned, that the present representation at least should be retained, but with regard to the principle of the Bill there can be no two opinions. It has its basis in an honest desire to give to the people of Western Australia fair and equitable representation because I defy any member, whether he be Liberal or Labour, to say how this measure will work out and whether it will be a benefit to the Labour party or to the Liberal party. Any man who claims to be a democrat should at least be prepared to do what is fair and just to the people of the State irrespective of whether it benefits him personally or not. I claim that the basic principle of this Bill is beyond dispute in its fairness to all sections of the community. I do not hear any opposition whatever to that statement.

Mr. Taylor: Does that justify it?

Mr. THOMAS: I have taken notice of the fact that the Opposition benches are

almost empty, and I attribute it to the fact that, notwithstanding that members of the Opposition are prepared to oppose this Bill at all costs, they are ashamed to show their faces here because they know they are opposing what is just and right. Members of the Labour party on the occasion we remember in 1911 stuck to their guns and fought their battle until their ranks were so diminished that there were hardly any of them left to fight, because they had been forcibly ejected. We can admire them for fighting like that. Members of the present Opposition prefer to get away from the enemy's guns.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the member for Geraldton? He is here.

Mr. THOMAS: I admire the hon. member for that. He is here taking his gruel, not from me but from other speakers, which other members of the Opposition ought to be here to receive. We are told that this measure would bring about unfair conditions for the grand old pioneers who have done so much for Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the new ones.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member for Murray-Wellington put in a plea for the grand old pioneers who made Western Australia what it is to-day, and contended for that reason it is fairer to maintain the constituencies as they are to-day than to give to those grand old pioneers the same equality in the matter of representation. The hon. member for Sussex represents a port about 20 or 30 miles from the place I have the honour to represent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You tried to represent it once.

Mr. THOMAS: And I went very near it too, considering the fact that the hon. member was Colonial Treasurer with years and years of Parliamentary experience behind him, and that I was a raw recruit; with only a fortnight's fight I got within 70 votes of him.

Mr. George: You did not go and live there.

Mr. THOMAS: I promised that if I was elected I would go and live there,

and if I had Sussex would be a better place than it is to-day. They would be a prosperous, hustling, successful people, whereas to-day, under the somnolent influence of the hon. gentleman who represents them, they are sleeping as soundly as they were years ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: A discussion on hours can come under the Loan Estimates.

Mr. THOMAS: I did not introduce this outside matter. I spoke of Sussex because the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition represents about 1,600 votes there.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: One thousand, six hundred and ninety-five.

Mr. THOMAS: And Bunbury has 2,860 votes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Sussex had 2,256 at the last general election.

Mr. THOMAS: Evidently the representative of Sussex does not know the number of people he does represent. The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin seems to be fairly emphatic that it is 1,695. Sussex is only a few miles from Bunbury. Why should the people of the district I represent have to have something like 1,200 votes more on their roll than there should be on the roll of the port immediately adjoining?

Mr. O'Loughlin: And why should mine have 2,000 more than yours?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Answer that.

Mr. THOMAS: I only wanted to arrive, if possible, at a logical conclusion. If we want to decide upon any method of redistribution let there be a principle underlying it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is no principle in this Bill.

Mr. THOMAS: There is no principle in the hon. member or his suggestions; I recognise that. Even if the leader of the Opposition would only argue that he believes that farming constituencies should have 2,000 votes, as a principle, well and good. Then we will say make every farming constituency approximate 2,000 votes. But by what law of justice or common sense can we give the gentleman who leads the Opposition 1,695 votes and another con-

stituency on exactly the same basis 1,000 or 1,200 votes?

Mr. Elliot: Where?

Mr. THOMAS: In my constituency.

Mr. George: You do not represent a farming district.

Mr. THOMAS: I represent more farmers than the hon. member for Sussex does.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are wrong there.

Mr. THOMAS: I represent nearly as many farmers as the hon. member has votes in the whole of his electorate.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Give me a few more farmers.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not object to putting farmers into any electorate because I remember I had the experience that when there were no farmers in my constituency I won by only 171, and when they added nearly 1,000 farming votes to my electorate I got in by about 251. Under any method of redistribution there must be a principle. The present Government have laid down the principle that all constituencies under certain conditions shall be represented by a certain proportion of the electors of Western Australia. I am not going to vote for a reduction of the number of members of the North-West.

Mr. McDonald: Then vote against the second reading.

Mr. THOMAS: I am in favour of the principle of the Bill, and I will support it, but where I see detail which can be amended I will vote in Committee for the alteration of it. I have no objection to the principle of this Bill whatever. I have mentioned the subject on every platform. I have spoken upon in Western Australia when fighting on my election, and I have not heard a single elector in Western Australia say it is not a fair principle and if the leader of the Opposition and others assume the attitude they do of trying to destroy this measure the people at the next elections will speak with the same voice as on a certain day in October, 1911.

Mr. George: What about the threats made at Geraldton?

Mr. THOMAS : What has the question of the election at Geraldton to do with this Bill ?

Mr. George : It has something to do with the fair square deal which you have been talking about.

Mr. THOMAS : I take strong exception to the accusation made by the member for Murray-Wellington that this Bill was introduced solely to secure at the next elections another return of the party to which I belong.

Mr. George : That is my opinion.

Mr. THOMAS : If that is the opinion of the hon. member for Murray-Wellington it is no credit to him. I venture to say it cannot be argued either here or on any platform in Western Australia that there is any ulterior motive attached to this Bill. Such a thing should not be said of the measure when no member in this House can say what the boundaries are going to be. I do not know what the boundaries of my own electorate will be if this Bill is passed, but I am satisfied to have the matter entrusted to an independent tribunal.

Mr. Elliot : Are they to be independent ?

Mr. THOMAS : I have not such a poor opinion of human nature as to say there are no unbiassed people.

Mr. Elliot : You have the picking of them.

Mr. THOMAS : Supposing we have ; if we have reached that depth of political degradation that those occupying the position of a Government of this country, with the support of practically two-thirds of the people of Western Australia behind them, cannot be trusted to appoint two or three individuals for the purpose of making recommendations under this Bill, I say if we have reached that position we are not fit to be in the Parliament of Western Australia. If the leader of the Opposition were on the Treasury bench I would have enough respect for his character and honesty of purpose, I believe, to be prepared to trust the hon. member to appoint the necessary individuals to carry this measure into effect. I sincerely trust that the Bill will become law. It must not be forgotten that when these com-

missioners are appointed and the electorates have been allotted, it again rests with this Parliament to say whether the scheme shall be accepted or not. And it also rests with another place. Whether or not the Bill receives the assent of hon. members opposite and members of the Liberal party generally, I am perfectly satisfied of this, that it will receive the approval and the political benediction of the people of Western Australia.

Mr. GARDINER : (Roebourne) : It is not my intention to eulogise the Government to any great extent in connection with this measure, rather do I intend to oppose it almost in its entirety. I quite agree with the Premier and other members who have spoken that there are great difficulties associated with such a task as this, and with the work of bringing about a redistribution which will give the whole of the people of Western Australia reasonable representation. I agree that if the matter is brought to this Chamber to be discussed, that the selfishness which is innate in mankind will play a great part in bringing about a redistribution of seats. So far as that part of the measure is concerned in respect to leaving it to commissioners to carry out this undertaking, I am in accord with the Government, but when they set out to draw up certain provisions or make regulations with which those commissioners must comply, and in doing so deliberately rob what is one of the greatest assets of the State of fair representation, then I must say that I intend to oppose them, and to use all the influence I have to see that the measure containing such proposals is not carried into effect. True, theoretically, uniformity may be a good thing. Members may say, one vote one value, but such a thing is not applicable to a State like Western Australia to-day. It may apply to closely settled communities, to countries where there is great community of interest, and where there is a great population, but when we take this vast State of Western Australia and endeavour to apply that principle of one vote one value, then I say that the Government or those responsible

are undertaking a proposition which is entirely impossible, and not applicable. We have it specifically stated in the measure that the main features which are to be taken into consideration are means of communication and distance from the capital, physical features and community or diversity of interest. At the same time they specifically state that the representation of the great heritage that we have in the North-West is to be reduced by one member. They go on to say that we have not a sufficient number of electors there to warrant that part of the State having at least four members. My opinion is that we should have increased representation owing, not altogether to the population, but to the great industries which undoubtedly exist there. If this measure is carried into effect we shall have the total number of electors on the roll divided by 47, the number of electorates, and that the voters in each electorate will be approximately 3,000. That means that the maximum will be something like 3,600 and the minimum 2,400 electors. What does that mean? Undoubtedly that the metropolitan electorates where the greater number of electors are, will have the maximum number, while the country places and the goldfields will have the smaller number. Yet, notwithstanding that the places adjacent to the metropolis will have the representation of one member for 2,400 voters, we find that the North-West with three electors will be almost up to the quota of these country places. We have in the North-West approximately 6,000 electors, or to be accurate, 5,800, and under the proposed redistribution of seats, it is definitely laid out that the commissioners must cut out one seat, so that each member will represent nearly 2,000 electors. The seat of the member for Kimberley, or a part of his constituency is over 2,000 miles from the seat of Government. The district I represent, or a portion of it, is 300 miles away, and those of the members for Pilbara and Gascoyne are even further from Perth, and in the case of the member for Gascoyne there

is necessitated a several weeks' trip if he desires to visit his constituency.

Mr. McDonald: I could do it in less time with a motor car.

Mr. GARDINER: No doubt if the hon. member had a motor car he could, but at the present time the constituency has to be visited by means of a horse and buggy. As it is at the present time the people of the North-West have not reasonable representation, and if we cut out one seat the result will be that a good deal of it will be practically unrepresented, and it will not receive that consideration to which it is justly entitled and which it has not received for a considerable time.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: If one seat is cut out you will only just have an average of 1,800 electors.

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. member's outlook does not extend beyond the confines of Subiaco. He has no conception of the possibilities of the North-West, and no idea of what the State contains other than what exists at Subiaco.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I recognise that you are the only great genius in the House.

Mr. GARDINER: There is one thing that I know, and it is that I am just as great as the hon. member's conception of himself. I was about to say that we should take into consideration the great wealth, and the producing possibilities of that part of the State, and if we decide to reduce its representation in Parliament, we cannot hope to get for it that consideration which is its just due. In the Northern Territory, when that portion of Australia was under the regime of the South Australian Government—and I consider that the South Australian Government at that time was the most democratic in the world—they realised the necessity for reasonable representation being given to that portion of Australia. The South Australian Government realised that the Northern Territory presented great possibilities, and I would point out in passing that although the Northern Territory is a great country it is not to be com-

pared with that which we have in the Northern portion of our State.

Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. GARDINER: They have not in the Northern Territory the various climates that we have, and they have not the great diversity of interests. We have in the North-West many industries, pearling, gold, copper, tin, etc., and only to-day I heard of a new proposition being discovered which will probably mean the employment of a great number of men in the future. At the same time, although this great country is undeveloped and unknown, no six men in this Chamber understand the conditions there, and yet we propose by this measure to reduce their representation by one member. In the Northern Territory with 1,200 electors there were two representatives in the Legislative Assembly of South Australia, and there was a special department for that Territory under the control of a Minister. They realised in that State the necessity for developing that unpopulated portion of South Australia, yet we in Western Australia propose to reduce the representation of the finest asset we have in the State. As for community of interests, how can one compare, say, Subiaco with the portion of the country represented by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. McDonald) or myself? We find up there the pioneers, adventurous spirits endeavouring to develop that country in the interests of those who live at Subiaco, and I say these people are entitled to greater representation than those in compact communities whose interests are identical. During the last election campaign a prominent member of the Labour party, visiting the North-West, stoutly declared that they should have special consideration—that was after he realised the possibilities of the district—and he recommended that a special commissioner or Minister should be appointed for the North. Therefore, I cannot see how members can now say that that country should have less representation than in the past. I intend opposing this measure through all its stages, and I hope that members will

see that the people of the North-West are granted reasonable and adequate representation.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): I must confess to a certain amount of surprise at hearing the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) state that he intended to support the second reading. I thought that as an old member for a North-West constituency he at least was certain to oppose the second reading.

The Premier: He goes upon the principle.

Mr. McDONALD: I was going to say he justified himself immediately afterwards by his reference to the appointment of commissioners and the basic principles of the Bill. He added too, and I am with him in this, that undoubtedly this measure is one of the fairest of the four or five redistribution measures which have been brought before the Parliament of Western Australia. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) referred to broad principles and high and mighty motives, and he added that he at least would not for selfish ends put his own gain or his position as a member of Parliament before the national welfare. On that account he said he intended to support the Bill. Even at the risk of being counted a selfish man, I intend to oppose the measure, not only on the second reading, but in Committee, and so far as the clauses concerning the North-West are concerned, I will welcome the amendment outlined by the member for Pilbara in that it will at least be some gain. If we cannot keep the North-West constituencies as at present constituted, then at least Parliament should see that the vast territory to the north of the tropic of Capricorn is not interfered with. The amendment would alter the Bill but little, as the Bill provides three constituencies north of the Murchison River and 47 below. The amendment would mean three north of the tropics and 47 below, and so with but very little alteration it would mean that the North would not lose a seat. In 1911 the famous Redistribution of Seats Bill was carried in this Parliament, and to that Bill is due the presence of at least 12 of us

in this House. For that at least let us be thankful. Before going to the hustings the present Premier and his supporters promised that if they should be returned to power they would introduce a redistribution of seats, and, in their opinion, a more just one.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: And you want to kill it.

Mr. McDONALD: I want to kill it as it is at present, and I would like to kill those who perpetrated it. The Premier has kept his promise; but, as the member for Roebourne has pointed out, he made another promise. He promised to adopt a policy for the greater development of the North-West. He pointed out the large industries and the mighty interests accruing in that portion of the country and he promised to bring in a Bill to give greater consideration to the North. He promised that a special department for the control of that portion of the country would be created. That promise has not been kept, and the member for Roebourne, growing impatient, a few weeks ago moved in this House that that promise should be kept and a special department be created. Now we find that so far from special consideration being given to the North in the way of increased representation, the existing representation is to be reduced by one quarter. There is in the area of that province, which covers nearly half of the State, 400,000 square miles. The Premier himself, I forget exactly whether it was at a public function or in reply to a deputation, referred to the difficulty of legislating for such an unwieldy State as Western Australia. This measure will in no degree minimise that. The North-West is as large now as it was then, and the reduction of the representation, the reduction of the number of members representing these constituencies, will not help him in any degree. Twenty or thirty years ago the population of Western Australia was mainly confined to a small fringe on the Western coast; so much so that the explorers who went into the interior, or those of them who had received assistance from Parliament, in their reports to Parliament said that

they had seen such portions of this country as no white man would ever see again. The story is told of an American who came out to Western Australia knowing that land was cheap and to be had in large quantities, and thinking that he would take up some areas. He returned to America, and on being questioned as to what class of country Western Australia was, said it was the best country in the world for running through an hour glass. Since then the population has spread hundreds of miles to the eastward, especially in the particular portion of the country to which we are at present referring, and which three or four of us have the honour to represent in this House. I was rather surprised, although possibly I misunderstood him, when the member for York (Mr. Monger) instituted a comparison between the outback farming constituencies and the outback portions of the North-West. Even the uttermost portions of the farming constituencies are within two or three days of Perth.

The Premier: What are you asking for the station owner?

Mr. McDONALD: I am only asking that the station owner should have one vote.

The Premier: But what does that one vote imply?

Mr. McDONALD: I want that portion of the State to have the representation to which I think it is entitled.

The Premier: What is your opinion founded on?

Mr. McDONALD: On the measure introduced by the Attorney General in which reference is made to community of interest and means of communication. If those things are to be considered in one direction they should be considered in another direction. I was referring to the comparison instituted by the member for York between outback farming places and portions of the North-West. There is one little test which we can apply to that comparison, that is the visits of Ministers. There is no agricultural show held in any portion of the southern part of Western Australia that is not attended by at least one Minister, and sometimes two. An outback func-

tion in one of the mining towns will attract a member of Parliament and possibly a Minister. The South-West during the last two Parliaments has been practically inundated with Ministers and members, but the visits of Ministers to the North-West might be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The Premier: You do not want us up there to be entertained by Japs.

Mr. McDONALD: They are not all Japs. We had a visit from a former Minister for Works who made a lot of promises when he was up there, which, I am glad to say, the present Minister for Works is carrying out. It is almost impossible for the present members for the North-West, owing to the size of their constituencies, to adequately represent them, and if the Government insist on reducing that number the representation will not be very great. The member for Pilbara and the member for Roebourne have pointed out that that particular portion of the State, as a revenue producer, is second to none, and the member for Roebourne called attention to the fact that the Northern Territory not only had a Minister controlling it but there were two members representing that particular portion, and they had 1,280 electors.

The Premier: What representation have they now?

Mr. McDONALD: It would be better for the North-West portion of the State, all that area North of the Murchison River, if it were in the hands of the Federal Government rather than in the hands of an unsympathetic Ministry such as the present. As I was saying the number of electors in the Northern Territory was only 1,280. On a former occasion in connection with, I think, a Redistribution of Seats Bill, the number of constituencies dealing solely with the pastoral industry was being considered. From Moore and Irwin northward to East Kimberley there were nine constituencies containing 1,280 electors and they had nine members representing them.

The Premier: That was what was keeping Western Australia back.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not justifying that at all, but I am only referring to the similarity of the figures. Those men may have kept Western Australia back, but they knew the possibilities of the North-West and they knew that the future of the State depended on the North-West.

The Premier: They have more than their share of representation in the Legislative Council now. They have one-tenth of the power in another place.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not dealing with the Legislative Council or anomalies of that description. One need only refer to the constituency of the member for Forrest. It has been said to-night that 4,000 members sent him to this Chamber, and he has often said that he knew of 16 people in his electorate who sent three members to another place. Even proportional representation, had it given special consideration to the North-West, not more than could be expected owing to its vastness of area, would be welcomed by us, and another measure referred to by the Premier, the initiative and referendum, would have given satisfaction also. But I am getting away somewhat from the thread of my argument. I have referred to the representation allowed to the Northern Territory, but here we have the representation of the North-West being reduced under this Bill. The basic principles of the measure do not appeal to me, and because of the injustice that is being done I intend to oppose the second reading and to vote against that clause in Committee.

Mr MALE: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	20
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	10
				—

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Elliott	Mr. Monger
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman

(Teller).



## NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Price
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Gill	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Walker
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Hudson
	(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): I think I was quite justified in asking for an adjournment of this debate inasmuch as the second reading of this Bill was only moved this week, and members who did not hear the speech of the Minister have had no opportunity to read his remarks in *Hansard*. A number of country members are away this evening, and will have no opportunity to speak on the Bill.

Mr. Taylor: It is unfair in the extreme.

Mr. MALE: Under the circumstances it is unfair.

Mr. Taylor: A disgrace.

Mr. MALE: And were I to take the time to look up in *Hansard* the remarks which were levelled against the member for Sussex and his Government during the debate on the Redistribution of Seats measure I could give extracts that would probably make members on the Government side squirm.

The Premier: This is not a redistribution of seats Bill.

Mr. MALE: It is the same thing.

The Premier: It is nothing of the sort.

Mr. MALE: To give it its correct title—

The Premier: It is merely to authorise the appointment of commissioners.

Mr. MALE: This Bill is for the same purpose. But in connection with this measure, the same as with others, the Premier is afraid to accept the responsibility of his position. We have found that time after time during this session. Only a few nights ago when making a reference to a cattle purchase, the Minister for Lands put the blame on to someone else, and would not accept the responsibility of his position. Only the other night when I referred to the

purchase of State steamers, the Minister tried to shelter himself behind someone else, and we find the same thing to-night. What is the justification for this Bill?

Hon. Frank Wilson: None.

Mr. MALE: Yes, there is; the justification is that Ministers before the coming election have to justify that extravagant language and conduct in which they indulged when our Bill was under consideration. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) said it was no disgrace for a man to stand behind his guns. Did not we see them with their tails down walking out of the Chamber.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Running away.

Mr. MALE: Talk about shaking in the rear; we saw their rears. Whatever principle may be contained in this Bill the Government are pledged up to the hilt to introduce it. How have they done it? They have waited until almost the last moment of this session to bring it in; they have had two solid years in which to bring it in, but it is not a redistribution Bill; it is a Bill to appoint commissioners. The Government have had two solid years in which to appoint commissioners, and have made no attempt to do so. Now, at the very last moment of the session, they bring down this Bill.

The Premier: You are off your chump.

Mr. MALE: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

The Premier: Is it a reflection?

Mr. MALE: It is not Parliamentary language.

Mr. George: Absolutely undignified and indecent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is larrikinism.

Mr. MALE: I think, Mr. Speaker, I am justified in asking that the remark be withdrawn.

The Minister for Mines interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member deems the remark offensive I ask that it be withdrawn.

The Premier: I withdraw, although I have had equally offensive things said about me.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We do not want any explanation.

The Premier: It is a matter of opinion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister for Mines ought to withdraw his remark that it was true. . . . .

Mr. MALE: I was pointing out the justification for this Bill from the Government point of view. As a member representing the North I most certainly will vote against any Bill which has for one of its purposes the disfranchisement of the North, a reduction of the number of members to which we are legitimately entitled. The broad principles of the Bill have been dealt with fully and ably by the leader of the Opposition. The Premier followed him with a speech in which he said the leader of the Opposition did not seem to be too happy. I would like to tell the Premier than when this Bill is received in the North—it has hardly been received in the House yet, but we have to debate it—together with the speeches and the interjections which the Premier has made this evening to members representing the North I can assure him that the people there will perfectly understand the amount of sympathy they can expect from the present Government. Night after night and week after week this session we have had interjections continually from the Premier which at least have convinced me as regards his attitude towards the North, and now that attitude is confirmed by what we find in this Bill. Other members representing northern constituencies have pointed out the disadvantages under which we labour. It is not my intention to go over these points again. The hour is too late, but I would like to point out to hon. members that the district I represent is further away from Perth by distance than is Melbourne. The district I represent is further away by time distance than Liverpool is from New York.

The Minister for Mines: The Perth seat is further away from the Federal House than Melbourne is, but it has not got any more representation.

Mr. MALE: It takes a man eight days by steamer to travel from Perth to the first port in my constituency.

The Premier: You have 80 electors who return three members to another branch of the legislature.

Mr. MALE: They have not the same work to do as members of the Legislative Assembly. Members of the Assembly have to be, as far as possible, conversant with the districts they represent, with the electors they represent, and I defy any man to be properly conversant with my portion of the State even as it is at the present time.

The Minister for Mines: He would have to learn the Japanese language.

Mr. MALE: That is only the kind of remark we expect from the front Ministerial benches.

The Premier: They are your cobbers, the Japs.

Mr. MALE: When one realises that one can travel by steamer for days along the coast of my electorate and travel for months in going through the electorate to make oneself conversant with the electors and the conditions prevailing there, one may ask, is it reasonable or proper that the number of representatives in the north of this State should be reduced? I say, no, and it is up to us to make a protest against such reduction. It has been pointed out by a previous speaker that the South Australian Government found it incumbent upon them to appoint a Minister for the Northern Territory, to look after that portion of the State. But what do we find here? The northern portion of our State which is equally, if not more valuable, is to be neglected. Instead of being given better representation by the Government what little we have is to be reduced. The Government have done everything they can do to take away from the North. Their very first action was to take away the commissioner who had been appointed for the North. It seems to me the right attitude for the North to adopt before very long will be separation if we cannot get representation, and let me say this, if the present attitude is to continue towards us we would be far better off under the protection of the Home Government than we are under the protection of the people who call themselves citizens and supporters of Western Australia. We want fair representation and we have a right to ask for it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You want to go beyond it.

Mr. MALE: We do not. We hear of community of interests. Of course community of interests should be represented, and it is idle for the Premier to say there is community of interests all over the State to the same degree. It is idle for the Premier to tell us that because a man is an engineer, therefore all the engineers of the State should be put into one community.

The Premier: I did not say so.

Mr. MALE: There are engineers in the North who have community of interests with the squatters of the North. It requires engineers to look after machinery and other things in connection with the squatting industry. They have community of interests; they are dependent one on the other. Of course they have community of interests in these districts. Is not a tradesman in a little town supported by the farmers in the district and does he not fulfil the purpose of supplying to these farmers? If the Premier were to adopt a quota similar to what was adopted by the late Attorney General we might arrive at some degree of satisfaction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Where is the great difference between this State and Queensland?

Mr. MALE: I am not discussing Queensland, I am discussing the conditions of this State; I have never been in Queensland. The hon. member might ask me what is the difference between this State and England. There is a great deal of difference between this State and England. If we have a big community of interests in any part of this State it is entitled to representation in this House. Why should it be disfranchised? Because we have 10,000 miners on the Golden Mile and only 500 people in Broome that is no reason why Broome should not be represented in this House. If there are different industries those industries are entitled to have representation at the seat of Government and to be heard. One could not expect these 10,000 miners to send members to this House and intelligently legislate for all the other industries. The general

principles of this Bill have been dealt with by other members and the wants of the North and the desire of the North for proper representation have been discussed by other members. Therefore, it is not my intention to unduly labour this question to-night, but supposing this Bill is passed, and supposing the commission are appointed we have no idea at the present moment as to how the commission will be constituted. Possibly they may be civil servants. Personally I object to civil servants being placed on this commission. I think it would be a wrong thing to do.

The Premier: Who arranged the boundaries for your Government on the occasion of your redistribution of seats?

Mr. MALE: We were men enough to take the responsibility of bringing in a Bill with the boundaries arranged.

The Premier: You took your responsibility and went to the wall.

Mr. MALE: We took our responsibility and are prepared to take it again.

Mr. Dwyer: You met your Waterloo.

Mr. MALE: The hon. member will meet his when the time comes. I think we are entitled to have some little information as to the constitution of this commission. It may be that the commission will be constituted of civil servants. If so it would be unfair to those civil servants, because whatever report they bring in would be brought up in this House and threshed out here. We have the right to pull that report to pieces and possibly in the criticism it might be found necessary to criticise even those who made the report. If there are persons in our civil service who have particular knowledge and ability in relation to this question, the commission would have the right to examine those men and to obtain from them all the information and the knowledge they require. I venture to say that an unbiassed commission would be able to take and weigh the knowledge the experts could give them probably better and with less bias than the experts themselves, but having done that, it would be next session, probably almost on top of the new election, before the

report could be brought to the House to be considered. And how are they going to get at the quota which is required under this Bill? Are they going to arrive at that quota from the present rolls, because if they are, I venture to predict, judging by the experience we have had at Geraldton with the present rolls, they are not fair rolls on which to form a quota. I contend it should have been the duty of the Minister in charge of this Bill to have brought it in at least twelve months ago, so that the report might have been considered by us and the rolls made clean and complete, and in that way it would have been possible to properly form the quotas.

The Premier: How long was it before the general election took place that your Bill was brought in?

Mr. MALE: The only argument the Premier attempts to put up in favour of this Bill is, "What did you do?" It does not matter how long it was.

The Premier: You cannot answer the question.

Mr. MALE: We took the responsibility of our Bill. It will be impossible to purify the rolls and pave the way for the carrying out of the election on the report which we shall have to thresh out some time next year. It is my intention to vote against the second reading of this Bill and to vote against its clauses when we reach the Committee stage, and more especially against the clause which will try and deprive the North of that representation to which it is entitled.

Mr. TAYLOR: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

It is unfair to try and push this Bill through the House at this time of the night.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The motion cannot be discussed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	18

Majority against	..	7
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# AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. Elliott	Mr. Price
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. McDonald	(Teller.)

# NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gill	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Lewis	(Teller.)
Mr. McDowall	

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I am indeed sorry that I have to make my remarks on the second reading of the Bill at this late hour of the night. In the early part of the evening I was informed that the second reading was not to be put through to-night, consequently I made no preparation to discuss it. So far as the Bill is concerned, on the face of it, it bears the stamp that there is no necessity for it. If its only object be to appoint commissioners to redistribute the seats, then I say that in my opinion the Government have sufficient power by executive authority to appoint a commissioner or commissioners, one, two, three, or five, to redistribute the seats and make recommendations, and then the Government could bring down a Redistribution of Seats Bill at once. The Bill tells the commissioners exactly how they are to redistribute the seats. It does not give the Government power to appoint commissioners to redistribute seats in Western Australia, allowing this Chamber to have 50 representatives; it instructs the three commissioners that there must be in a certain area 47 members, and another area, a large and important area too, but not largely peopled, there shall be only three members. Therefore the Bill tells the commissioners exactly what they are to do and how they are to do it. If the House carries this proposal, of course the responsibility will rest with the House. The Bill bears that stamp on it.

Mr. George : Shirking responsibility.

Mr. TAYLOR : The hon. member may describe it in that way if he desires. We have heard hon. members to-night lauding the principle underlying the Bill and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) dilated upon that underlying principle. One of its great virtues was its principle. I do not know that there is any great necessity for eulogising a Bill, or indeed anything else, if it has so much to recommend it, for we are told that good wine needs no bush. Hon. members supporting the Bill have pointed out that it gives the power to commissioners to redistribute the seats and that neither the House nor the Government know how the redistribution will be made. I am going to make this statement before the Bill is carried, and we will see how it pans out after the commissioners submit their report to Parliament. It has been known for the last two years in Perth that the Mount Margaret seat was to be wiped out as soon as the Government brought down their Redistribution of Seats Bill. I have been told that hundred of times by people in Perth. Mount Margaret has to-day, according to the latest records in the *Statistical Register*, 1,870 electors, while Leonora has 2,117 and Menzies 1,320. Since that rumour was first heard the Mount Margaret electorate has lost a good few of its people owing to the mines shutting down and there being no work. Large numbers of wages men have left the district during the last two years, notwithstanding which there are still 1,870 electors in the constituency. If there be any justification for the cutting out of the Mount Margaret electorate, it cannot be on account of the condition of the rolls. Now, I make the statement before the commissioners are appointed, and we will see what attitude the commissioners take up in reference to the matter. We have heard that they are to have no instructions, that they are to redistribute on the basis of community of interest, mode of transit, easy access of communication, and with regard to certain physical features of the territory which they are to consider.

Hon. Frank Wilson : What about Cue ?

Mr. TAYLOR : I do not know, but it is patent to me, notwithstanding what arguments are used against it, that if the Bill is accepted and the commissioners redistribute under the Bill, which they must do, there is only one result to expect, and that is that the more densely populated portions of Western Australia will receive increased representation in the House while the sparsely peopled areas will have less. I ask whether it is wise to carry out the theory of representation according to population in a new country of large area like Western Australia ? It is a sound principle in old countries that are highly developed and successfully peopled almost up to their carrying capacity, but in a new growing country like this, with great possibilities for the people who are pioneering the country, we find men who are opening up territory. Why should they be retarded ? Why discourage them from going into the forests and sending our marketable products to older countries ? Why prevent them from prospecting the auriferous country ; why block them from having a say in this House ? When I came here 20 years ago I went to the Eastern Goldfields, then represented by Mr. C. J. Moran, altogether an admirable representative— young and fearless—few men who have passed through this House were as capable of representing that territory as was Mr. Moran. In those days we had one man in miles and miles of territory. Then afterwards, the Redistribution of Seats Bill gave the goldfields more representation with North Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Yilgarn. When the late Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory, represented almost everything north of Kalgoorlie, at all events as far as one could go from Menzies, taking in the whole of Leonora and Black Range, and some of what is now known as the Murchison electorate, and the whole of Mount Margaret, we as prospectors in that country realised how feebly we would be represented by the most able man in Parliament, con-

stituted as Parliament then was. Why, our representative could not see half his constituency! I have all my life been on the frontiers of Australia, always in the outback districts, and I know how difficult it is for people in the back country to be adequately represented in Parliament, no matter how able their representative might be. In an outlying centre do we find the Press with leading articles on the questions of the day, as here in Perth? If there is any desire for reform, if there is a bad road, or a bad bridge, or dangerous crossing, within miles of the City, there are articles and letters and reports of deputations to the Minister to see that it is improved; and we find the Minister touring through the nearer districts every week in motor cars driven at lightning speed; whereas in the back country a Minister goes on a flying trip once a year, covering hundreds of miles, and the people feel they are lucky to get that much. It is indeed difficult for the outlying parts of Western Australia to be adequately represented in this Chamber, and the Bill will make it worse for those people than it is today. Mind you, as I have said before, theoretically the argument for representation according to population is sound, but in a new country it is not equitable, and it is unjust to those opening up the country, those who go in to the back country and suffer all the hardships and privations and inconvenience inseparable from life in such districts. We further penalise them by giving them less representation in the legislative halls of their country. It is a preposterous argument in a new country like Western Australia. We know well that for thickly populated places there are the mayor and councillors, and such places are of importance. When a Minister arrives he is received, and deputations from the mayor and councillors and various representatives of the province are there to advocate the wants of the district. But you cannot get that in outlying areas, in timber areas or on the goldfields. I hope that when the Bill is in Committee the Government will give an opportunity to the commissioners to give greater re-

presentation to the sparsely peopled portions of the State. This is not a redistribution of seats, although it is giving power to redistribute. I would infinitely prefer the redistribution itself brought before the House. There is no responsibility at all in this measure. If there were a Bill brought down bearing on the face of it the responsibility of the Government to support it, I would know where I was. I have always opposed the whittling away of authority, and if there is any hon. member who abhors that it is the Attorney General. We have heard the Attorney General in days gone by opposing any form of removing responsibility from the Government. This is the third time I have had to consider a redistribution of seats. I opposed the redistribution which was spoken of to-night in connection with the Forrest electorate when that electorate was first established.

The Premier: Did you oppose the last Bill?

Mr. TAYLOR: I did.

The Premier: You did nothing of the kind.

Mr. TAYLOR: I voted against the second reading of the Bill.

The Premier: But where were you in Committee?

Mr. TAYLOR: I was in the Chair. I did not rush away from the fight like the Premier when victory was within reach. It was a most scandalous thing. The party properly led could have won the day, but he ran away and left the Chamber empty.

The Premier: We did not run away like you did.

Mr. TAYLOR: I opposed that redistribution when the Forrest electorate was first established, but the Labour party supported it. I said it was wrong to do it then, and everybody knows now that it was wrong. Time has proved the correctness of the attitude I adopted. I opposed the last Redistribution of Seats Bill also.

The Premier: You did not.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member knows that I did.

The Premier: I know and everybody else knows what you did.

Mr. TAYLOR: I can read to the hon. member my speech on the second reading.

The Premier: The speech is nothing; you often speak one way and vote another.

Mr. TAYLOR: A man is often compelled to vote in a way he does not believe to be right. The Premier knows that. That is one of the drawbacks of party politics. A man has often to vote for his party even against his own convictions.

The Premier: You never did anything of the kind.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier does not like anybody to criticise his legislation, but I am here to criticise legislation, no matter who brings it down. I am not here to sit in silence and accept everything that is brought before the House. That is not the function of a member of Parliament. As I said before, I opposed those other Bills, and I want to emphasise the fact that it is refreshing to know after so many years that the attitude then taken up by some members of the House in regard to the Forrest seat is justified to-day. The Redistribution of Seats Bill which was brought forward by the last Government was criticised sufficiently when it was before the House, and also to-night and in the country, and there is no necessity for me to deal with it further. I am sorry that the Bill is going through the second reading stage to-night, but it is to be hoped that if the Bill is to get fair criticism we will at least have some opportunity of dealing with it in Committee at some reasonable and decent hour.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): It is not my intention to take up a great deal of the time of the House at this late hour, but I want to express my opinion that when we are approaching the early hours of the morning the time has arrived when we might expect an adjournment of the House. The Government make up their minds, however, to refuse us that privilege.

The Minister for Mines: Of course it was always accorded to us.

Mr. ALLEN: I want again to tell the hon. member that that attitude is like a

little child saying "You did it to us, therefore we are going to do it to you."

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You know it is necessary to get the legislation through.

Mr. ALLEN: I contend that men are not in a fit and proper condition to do business at the early hours of the morning.

The Premier: Some are not.

Mr. ALLEN: Even the Premier is not fit. When we reach a certain hour it is a fair thing that the House should be adjourned so that we can go home and get our proper rest, and then come back to the business of the country with our minds clear.

Mr. Turvey: Will you support sitting at ten o'clock in the morning?

Mr. ALLEN: I might even do that if it were necessary, but I do not think it is necessary. We meet at 3.30, and if we sit till 10.30 at night it is a fair thing. I do not think the electors expect us to sit here hour after hour through the night and early morning, with often not half a dozen chairs occupied. Many members did not have the opportunity of hearing the Attorney General introduce this Bill. Some on this side were compelled to leave to-night to get away to the country, believing that this measure would not be rushed through, and that they would have an opportunity of speaking on it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: If we wanted to speak we were told to stay.

Mr. ALLEN: It might be so on the Government side of the House. That is the peculiar thing, that members on that side are told what is to happen, but members on this side are left in the dark.

The Premier: I was asked by one hon. member if we were going through the second reading, and I said I expected we would.

Mr. ALLEN: A number of members on this side left for their homes, believing that they would have an opportunity of speaking on this measure. It is an important Bill, and deserves the fullest consideration at the hands of every member. The leader of the Opposition when speaking to-night, was bombarded with interjections about the Redistribution of Seats Bill introduced in 1911, and all

sorts of insinuations were thrown out about gerrymandering and all that sort of thing. That is not worth much, because if there was any idea of gerrymandering in the minds of any people the lie direct was given to that suspicion by the result of the last election. The idea that it was done with the object of preserving certain seats for the Liberal party existed only in the fertile imaginations of those who invented it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They built it up for a purpose.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, and spread it broadcast from every platform in the State. This is an important measure, and we ought to have every opportunity and ample time to consider it, but the Government have evidently made up their minds that this shall not be accorded to members of the Opposition. The Government are determined to carry the second reading to-night, apparently at all costs. I do not intend to impute any ulterior motives to the Government—

Mr. George: There is no need to.

Mr. ALLEN: Although it has been imputed that the last Bill had for its object the safeguarding of certain seats. There might be points in this measure worthy of consideration, though I have heard only the debate to-night and am, therefore, not in a position to express my opinions on it. Being an important measure the adjournment asked for might very well have been granted in order to give us an opportunity to consider the proposals. If this had been a measure on the basis of proportional representation which has been before the minds of the public of late, probably we would have been better able to discuss it, but the tendency of the House seems to be that those who have to pay the taxes are to have as little representation as possible, and those who are to have the bulk of the representation are to be practically free from the taxation with which this country is being burdened. There is one feature of the Bill to which I object, and that is the appointment of commissioners. This matter is absolutely in the hands of the Government. I do not want to impute motives to anyone—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): And all the time you are doing it.

Mr. ALLEN: Then the Honorary Minister must have a pretty dense brain. I challenge him to indicate any remark which I have made which can be construed into an imputation against the Government. It is most undesirable that the appointment of commissioners should be left in the hands of a party Government.

The Minister for Mines: Their work will be subject to the approval of Parliament afterwards.

Mr. ALLEN: What difference will that make when the Government have such a majority here?

The Minister for Mines: We have not a majority in another place.

Mr. ALLEN: What has that to do with it? I do not want to take up the time of the House at this late hour. I had not prepared myself to speak on this Bill, but I rose to emphasise my regret that the Government could not, or would not, see their way clear at midnight to grant an adjournment and to protest that those members who have returned to the country honestly believing that on Tuesday next they would be afforded an opportunity to speak on this measure are being deprived of their right to do so. Those hon. members were not expected to remain here. On Wednesday we sat through the night until 6.30 a.m., and a week ago we sat all night, and hon. members are not in a fit state to consider legislation of this kind.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is your method.

Mr. ALLEN: It is not to the credit of the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was the Opposition who kept us here all night when we were in power.

Mr. ALLEN: I do not intend to take up any more time, but seeing that I had many other members have not had an opportunity to consider the measure, I propose to vote against the second reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): I regret as much as anyone that we should be debating this measure at this



late hour, but it is inevitable that the work of the session must be proceeded with. There is a great deal to be done before we can finish, and we desire to close the session before Christmas, and it is with no desire to hurry speakers or to plunge them into heated fever that we are obliged to continue until a late hour.

Mr. Allen: It is done so frequently.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot understand the warmth shown in connection with this Bill, because it is purely a machinery and preliminary measure for the purpose of obtaining some guidance from the House with a view to bringing in a Redistribution of Seats Bill which the House will be able to consider from A to Z by and by.

Mr. Male: We object to the machine.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The machine is an absolute necessity. I can understand those who are perfectly satisfied with the present order of things saying there is no necessity to introduce a machinery measure of this kind, but it must be remembered that if we do not bring forward such a Bill the Government will be accused of going back on their most sacred and loudest uttered pledges prior to the last election.

Mr. George: Could you not do the work without commissioners? You have the power.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly we could without asking the House to approve of commissioners, but we desire to be consistent, and let me draw attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Mount Margaret when he said there was a time when I above all others objected to the whittling away of the powers, privileges, or responsibilities of members of Parliament. I am as strong in that direction now as then, but there is this difference that in the case of a redistribution of seats we are acting as judge and jury for ourselves. No party can be a judge of his own cause, and, therefore, it is a usual action that where each member is personally concerned, the decision of the point, as far as possible, should be left to an interested, unbiassed tribunal.

Mr. Gardiner: You want to appoint commissioners and instruct them what to do.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will deal with that point by and by, but I want to show that I am absolutely consistent in the view I am taking as to the appointment of commissioners. Hon. members will permit me to refer to an utterance I made on the 10th January, 1911, when I spoke on the Redistribution of Seats Bill then before Parliament. On that occasion I said—

I defy the Government to give an instance of a measure of a like character that has been left from its inception in the hands of the party in power. This is not the first Redistribution of Seats Bill that has been introduced in the world, and not the first by many in the Commonwealth, but it is the first that has been introduced without being submitted for consideration in the way of the fixing of boundaries and even of the principles of the measure, either to the two parties of the House, who are both equally concerned or, as is preferable and as always has been done by a high-minded Government in power, referring it to an independent tribunal who have no political interests, or at least would not assert them in the drafting of the boundaries.

I maintain that in the course I have adopted in introducing this measure, I have been perfectly consistent with what I stated then. Upon the very highest principles we are justified in taking the course we have taken. Every man's seat is more or less in jeopardy when we have to redelineate the boundaries. Each one of us is concerned, and therefore we become as it were biassed in one direction or another.

The Minister for Mines: Unconsciously biassed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We cannot help it; it is human nature, and in order that there may be fair play and, as far as human ingenuity can make it possible, that justice to all may be done, let it be done by those who have no political or party interests to serve.

Mr. George: But you are giving the commissioners instructions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then I come to that point. Why have we given them instructions? What are the instructions? We have given instructions that special consideration shall be given in the delineation of the boundaries of those electorates which are the most distantly removed from the capital, which can exercise the least political personal influence on the part of the electors themselves, which stand outside so far that means of communication are difficult and are liable to be interrupted. That is the main purpose, the main instruction. The other, in regard to physical features, such as separation by a river or chain of mountains, that is a convenient delineation that affects nobody. The third instruction, that of community or diversity of interests, comes last in consideration. Let hon. members endeavour to understand the purposes of the Government, and take first of all this principle, that whether a man lives away in the south, or in the heart of Australia, or in the far north, he is a man, and men are entitled to equal political rights wherever they may be placed, and if they are entitled to equal political rights, a man counts for and is a man wherever his abode may be.

Mr. Gardiner: That is good in theory.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What is more, what we aim at and strive for is the very heart of the Labour movement—giving to all men equality.

Mr. Gardiner: This is a form of centralisation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member forgets that a man is a man whether he is in the heart of a big city, in a small township, or in the wilds of the forest. It is his manhood we have to consider, his aspirations, his right to live. Once one departs from that principle one justifies class distinctions and re-establishes the evil features of privilege. Therefore, we endeavour to establish first that principle. But this is a new country; we consider that fact, and in doing so are departing from the main pathway, and to that extent, I admit, are being false to the principle so dear to us. We have recognised in a new country that for practical purposes, at the hour, at this

moment, it may be well not too strictly to apply that principle.

Mr. Gardiner: You are applying it fairly strictly though.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let us see how strictly. We may have gone too far or not far enough, but we have done the best that could be done. We have said that the city itself shall not have the full entitlement of the quota.

Mr. Gardiner: It controls the State under this measure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member must know that his principles will not allow him, when he comes to bedrock, to deny that a man living in the city is entitled to all the political rights of a man living anywhere else, and the fact that he is in aggregation and in constant communication with his fellow men, in everlasting intellectual friction, in moral touch, is in itself an evidence of his tendency to more rapidly improve and be fitted by every qualification of manhood and experience for the expression of the sentiment of brotherhood and manhood; in other words, the man living in the thick and stir and strife and stimulus of city life becomes more intellectually capable than his unfortunate brother who is compelled to linger his life out away from the blessings of comradeship with society.

Mr. Gardiner: You know very well that those adjacent to the seat of Government get a better hearing than those who are far removed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I fully grant that, and it is the sole reason that has induced the Government to introduce the principle of varying the quota so as to deny to those right on the spot the privilege—

Mr. George: The quota is the same for the 47 districts.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. We are charged with giving directions. What are our directions? Our directions are that the man in the metropolitan area shall not be given the same political force as the man outback. We have instructed the commissioners to make a difference.

Mr. George: It is not in the Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is in the Bill. If the hon. member reads it

Bill he must see it. That is the only material direction we give them, because the others are immaterial, they are old. That is the only material direction, that there shall be variation in the quota, giving the quota a one-fifth diminution in the city and one-fifth extension far away from the city.

Mr. Gardiner: And a further direction that a great part of the State shall have only three members.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member should see we are endeavouring, not perhaps to the perfection he would like, to aim at decentralisation and to give the country districts a better show. The House will have the chance to discuss the question right through and at every stage when the Bill is ultimately brought before this Chamber. I say, taking into consideration all the facts, if the principle of the quota was applied equally throughout the State, even with the one-fifth increment on account of distance and one-fifth diminution on account of nearness to the capital, the North-West would be given only one representative.

Mr. Gardiner: You are wrong, we have 6,000 electors.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Taking the four constituencies, 5,000 electors. I think it comes to 5,000 odd. Give them their quota, it is 1,800 odd for each of these electorates. It would take three of them to make the quota and only get one representative. If that was so it would be wrong to the North-West, and we cannot allow it much as we love the principle of equality of manhood, it would not be just to the North-West. It would be wrong to give the North-West only one representative or even two. We must give them three.

Mr. Gardiner: When they are entitled to five.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not on the quota, not on the equality of manhood, not on equal political force to each political unit. It is departing from that principle and I think unfairly accusing the Government of deliberately intending to injure the North-West, whereas, though it might not be done to the hon. member's

satisfaction, the sole aim of the Government in making that charge was to give as full representation as possible when making the redistribution.

Mr. Gardiner: If the Attorney General knew the North-West and its possibilities he would agree that it was entitled to more representation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Is it not the same in my electorate?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You are worse off than they are.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have an enormous area in my electorate and it would take me months to travel over it. It has every phase of possible development, mineral, pastoral, and agricultural, and all the phases of human interest that come from the possibility of developing city and township life. All these are there, and my constituency may have to be enlarged, nay, it may be possible that in order to make up the quotas my constituency may disappear. It is within the bounds of possibility, and none of us are safe. But, if it continues to exist, it will be still larger than it is now, and in all conscience it is too big now for one man to represent. If we went on the representation of interests, and of the possibilities of that country, then there ought to be 10 representatives for the district of Kanowna alone.

Mr. Gardiner: You could put Kanowna into a little corner of the North-West.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, you could not; the hon. member is speaking without knowledge. My electorate extends from the southern coast in the neighbourhood slightly to the west of Esperance, right up beyond the Kalgoorlies to the other side of Kanowna, and hundreds of miles away to the South Australian border.

Mr. Gardiner: It is not bigger than Kimberley.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What is the good of talking about a few acres of difference. I appreciate that manly British spirit that fights for the constituency the hon. member represents, but we must not forget, either, that this State of ours is made up of human beings whose whole interests are locked up in the wel-

fare of the whole State, and whilst it is true we may not know all that is necessary for the Kimberleys and the North-West, and that those whose lives are spent down here, who never travel and never read, do not know of the requirements and possibilities of that portion of this great State, still one man can communicate the truth to receptive ears with as much force as twenty. I refuse to believe that the men representing the gold-fields, those who represent the country districts, and the men representing the towns, are dead to the value of that great area represented by the member for Roebourne. I refuse to believe that those who sit in this House, who have never seen the Kimberleys, and are not aware of the nature of the soil, or the possibilities of the Gascoyne or the Pilbara electorates, I refuse to believe that they are absolutely callous to the welfare of that portion of the State, that they do not care what becomes of it, and that they are so devoid of human interest and patriotism as to allow that place to be utterly neglected. They, too, will devote their time and energy, when the facts are brought before them and when the opportunity comes along, towards giving that part of the State as much attention as they do to any other. The hon. member cannot accuse me of ever being desirous of forgetting any part of this State, which I look upon as one body that must be fed by the life-blood of the whole, that the branches, the far-off extremities, must receive the life-force circulating through the whole community. Because we represent metropolitan constituencies or mining constituencies we do not forget the great interests, the great possibilities of the North-West.

Mr. Gardiner: But they have been forgotten for 20 years.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The nation is only now awakening, and what has awakened the nation? Is it the relegation back to the old times of class distinctions, or is it the awakening of the great latent force represented by the mental activity of the Labour movement, which believes in just development and the distribution of all the wealth the State

can bring forward? Where are the friends of the North-West?

Mr. Gardiner: Right here.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is true the friends of the North-West are here.

Mr. Underwood: We are right here.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have listened with considerable interest to the speech delivered by the member for Kimberley, but I know that with all his honesty of purpose there is there a warping of the mind on great questions that concern the bulk of humanity. I accuse him of no dishonesty, but I do say that because of the natural trend of his education and the habits of his life, he is circumscribed in his sympathies, and his wish for the distribution of wealth is within—

Mr. Underwood: It has nothing to do with this.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If you are anxious to return to the old order of things you get representatives of these far off constituencies who are serving their own class purposes and ends.

Mr. Underwood: I am serving a better class than you are, and don't you forget it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member does not know what I am saying; I am saying that if the North-West is to have justice done to it, and my part of the world is to have justice done to it, for they are both extremes, the only hope is in this movement.

Mr. Gardiner: And you are now cutting down their representation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This movement recognises the equality of manhood, and equality of manhood gives the same political force and right to every human being in the community. Therefore if we reduced it to that, if the North-West were treated on that principle it would receive only one representative, but on the principle sought to be applied it has been granted three. In the course we have taken we have deprived no hon. member of his rights.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are depriving the North-West of rights.

Mr. Male: And giving a direction.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Which is in the direction of the suggestions of the hon. member. I want to say that whatever we have done, and whatever the commissioners may do, the final decision is reserved for the House. It is reserved for every member, for the presentation of facts on whichever side members may sit. And it being thus, what wrong can there possibly be in a Bill of this kind, which is necessary for guidance, and aims at a sketch of boundaries drawn entirely free from all political influence? One would remark, in answer to the hon. member who says "Why did you not bring it in earlier" that the hon. member knows that the moment we get a Redistribution of Seats Bill we are not justified in continuing the House any longer. If we are to do our work, complete our task, fulfil the promises we made, we require to attempt that which our electorates have sent us here for. Having done it, if we want a redistribution of seats it must be brought in at a time close to the election, when upon the merits of that measure we must stand or fall in the eyes of the public.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	9

Majority for .. 9

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Price
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Gill	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Walker
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Hudson

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Elliott	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cardiner	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. George	Mr. Layman
Mr. Male	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 12.23 a.m.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 2nd December, 1913.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PETITION—WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (Metropolitan-Suburban) presented a petition from the West Australian National Council of Women praying for an amendment of the Criminal Code Amendment Act to deal with the White Slave Traffic.

Petition received and read.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I do not propose to proceed any further at the present time. I understand the motion that the petition be printed is not moved unless it is proposed to proceed further with it.

The PRESIDENT: That is so.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary—1, Mining Act, 1904—Additional Regulation—Regulation No. 70 (b). 2, Fisheries Act, 1905—Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

### QUESTION—CORONER FOR METROPOLITAN DISTRICT.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the resolution passed by the Council last session, which was acceded to by the Minister, that a coroner should be appointed to the metropolitan district, is it intended