

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am quoting the Minister. If a cattle owner brands 2,000 calves this year, and from them produces 700 bullocks four years hence, he will do very well. But the Federal taxation people tax him on the whole 2,000, and rebate him on the 700 when sold. If the calves die this year that is his look out. However, while the cattle delivered at Wyndham were being paid for at £2 17s. per head, the amount of wages and salaries paid here and in Wyndham during the time that the cattle walked in at one door and out at the other was £2 5s. per head. It just shows how a Government concern is doing something to crush the cattle industry. If the development of the South-West is run on similar lines, I pity the poor people who have to stand up against it. Fortunately, the North has had some good seasons. Still, the stations are not paying expenses, and they never will pay expenses until the Wyndham Meat Works are run on some other system than that which returns to the cattle owner £2 17s. per bullock delivered at Wyndham, and to the men who put the bullock in one door and out of the other £2 5s. Another matter to which I must refer is the expenditure of money without the approval of Parliament. I understand that under constitutional government Parliament has to approve of expenditure. Yet in this Appropriation Bill there appears a sum of £30,000 to build the Como tramway. Could anything be more farcical? The tramway has been built and the cars are running over it, and now the House is asked to approve of £30,000 expenditure for the construction of the tramway. I do not know what the result would be, but I should strike that item out of the schedule. The result might be that somebody would get the sack, but it is time this House took the position seriously and somebody was censured for spending £30,000 in building a tramway line and then coming to Parliament to ask for authorisation of the expenditure.

The Minister for Education: The Como tramway was built this year, not last year.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister means this financial year. That tramway was built not only without the consent of Parliament, but in defiance of a promise to Parliament that it would not be built. We are supposed to live under responsible government, but actually we live under irresponsible government. I want hon. members to understand that we are individually and collectively responsible when the day of reckoning comes, we shall be held individually and collectively responsible. If anybody will listen to me when the crisis comes, I shall read my speeches to him. Probably no one will listen to them, but they will be a record to show that I was not a party to this business. The commencement date of the financial year is the first July, and here we are on the 24th January, with nearly seven months of the financial year gone, and now we are asked to approve of these Estimates. Again I ask, could anything be more farcical? I am sorry that I have

had to point to the other side of the picture. Figures are always hard to deliver, and perhaps are sometimes difficult to understand; but I think I have shown that there is another side of the picture, and I hope hon. members will recognise that fact. I hope that hon. members, when speaking on the second reading of this Bill, will bear in mind that the Government have kept us waiting for seven months before presenting these Estimates to us. I suggest that we might keep another place waiting a while longer, so that we may have an opportunity of dealing with the Bills sent down. I support the second reading of this Appropriation Bill. There will be opportunity to block the passage of the measure at a later stage until such time as the House receives the treatment that is due to it from another place in connection with measures transmitted to that Chamber.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.*

*Wednesday, 24th January, 1923.*

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

## QUESTIONS (2)—WATER SUPPLIES.

### *For Mining Purposes.*

Mr. LUTHEY asked the Minister for Water Supply,—1 Has Cabinet come to any decision on the question of cheaper water for mining purposes? 2 If not, when is a decision likely to be arrived at?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied:—1 and 2, The matter is still under consideration, and a decision will be arrived at as early as possible.

*Wicherina Reservoir.*

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Water Supply:—When is it anticipated that water from Wicherina reservoir will be available for reticulation at Geraldton?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY, replied:—The pipe line is undergoing tests which, if satisfactory, will enable the water to be turned on during the next few days.

## QUESTION—TRAFFIC SIGNALLING.

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:—When will he be able to give a definite answer to the question I put to him a week ago relating to the regulation of traffic after sunset.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have referred the question to the departmental officers, and as soon as I get their answer I will communicate it to the hon. member.

## SELECT COMMITTEE—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, the time for bringing up the Committee's report was extended till 7th February.

## BILL—HOSPITALS TAX.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

## BILL—MINER'S PHTHISIS.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—HOSPITALS.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

On motion by the Premier, so much of the Standing Orders was suspended as was necessary to enable the remaining stages of the Bill to be taken at the one sitting.

## Remaining Stages.

Reports (two) of Committee adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

## Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [2-44]: I strongly object to the Bill. It contains many imperfections, and is calculated to bring about many things not in the best interests of the country. If to-day the electors are dissatisfied with the proportion of representation they get in this House, the Bill is not going to make things any better; with the exception of one section, the electors will be more dissatisfied than ever with their representation here. We have already seen that amongst members of the metropolitan

area, there is a fairly general feeling that they are being given a good less deal under this Bill than they consider they are entitled to. I am sure the goldfields residents are equally convinced they are entitled to greater representation.

The Premier: They cannot all have it.

Mr. CORBOY: No, but a very big section of the people are convinced that under this Bill they are not going to get full and proper representation. It is largely because of this that the Bill, in my opinion, will be a failure. Any measure for the better representation of the people in Parliament, which does not convince the people themselves that they will be better represented, is so much waste of time. What is the good of the Premier coming here and saying, "We shall work this out in figures and convince one another it is all right," while at the same time three-quarters of the people of the State are convinced that it is all wrong. If we are going to have a measure for the better representation of the people in Parliament, the measure, to be a success, must convince the electors that some improvement will result. I have no doubt that the little section of electors in the North will be satisfied with the representation they are to receive. I am equally convinced that the four members representing the North and granted immunity under this measure will also be satisfied. It is quite possible the agricultural section of the community, despite their continuous wailing about their disabilities, will also be satisfied.

Mr. Latham: You represent some of them.

Mr. CORBOY: And I hope to represent more before many years pass.

Mr. Latham: So do we.

Mr. CORBOY: But the ones I represent are typical goldfields people, who are prepared to put up a fight for what they desire without continually crying over it. I am afraid the hon. member and many of his constituents are not of that type. The northern portion of the State will be specifically set apart and granted four seats. Thus, four members will be free from being dealt with by the commission which it is proposed to appoint under the Bill. It is claimed that these four districts are far distant from the seat of government and that they do not possess the travelling facilities available to the people in other parts of the State; because of their distance from the seat of government, and the difficulty of transport, they are entitled to a more favourable quota than would ordinarily accrue to them under a measure of this kind. If the northern portion of the State had its representation assessed on the same basis as the outer goldfields, instead of having four members, it would have only two. I do not contend that two would be all the North is entitled to. The northern portion of the State is worthy of more representation than that, but the argument regarding travelling facilities and the distance from the capital applies with equal force to other portions of the State. I refer to the south coast country, the whole of which will come under the provision for the outer goldfields. One portion of it is in my electorate and the remainder is in the district of Kanowna. That south coast country is more isolated than the northern portion of the State as regards facilities for transport, mails, etc., and it is almost equally

distant in actual mileage from the seat of government.

Mr. Marshall: You do not expect the Premier to commit political suicide, do you?

Mr. CORBOY: I am convinced that by this Bill he will be committing suicide. The Government who survive a redistribution of seats Bill must have put up an extremely good measure. In introducing such a measure at any time, the Government take a big risk, and I am satisfied this Bill will bring the downfall of the present Government.

Mr. Teesdale: You will not growl at that. That is what you are aiming at.

Mr. CORBOY: What is the good of a new Government if, in the process of getting it, my head is cut off?

Hon. P. Collier: We want the present Government to die honourably, not to commit suicide.

Mr. CORBOY: I have quite a number of incidents in mind to illustrate my argument regarding facilities. A short time ago the Press published paragraphs referring in appreciative terms to the aerial mail service to the North, and special mention was made of the fact that it had been possible to take a doctor from the metropolis in an urgent case within the space of a few hours, in order to perform an operation, which saved a patient's life. These facilities for obtaining expert assistance are available to any portion of the North.

Mr. Underwood: How close does it go to Wyndham?

Mr. CORBOY: It should be possible to reach Wyndham from the end of the aerial mail route fairly quickly.

Mr. Underwood: It is only 700 miles by land and 500 by water.

The Minister for Mines: Have you ever scratched out the route on the map and seen how much of the North the aerial service touches?

Mr. CORBOY: I am aware it does not cover the whole of the North, but there are other advantages enjoyed by the North apart from the mail service. There are four steamers under the control of the Minister running on the north coast. On the south coast we have only one steamer. It would make a decent lifeboat for one of the boats running north. It is just a little tub of a boat but, considering its type, it is doing very good work. Occasionally, however, we have gaps of six to eight weeks during which it is impossible for the boat to call, and we get no other facilities when the boat is not running. Quite recently the station master in charge of the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway was taken ill. His wife spent 50 guineas to get a doctor from the Great Southern. The doctor arrived five minutes before the man died. This shows what sort of facilities we have on the south coast. We are suffering from disabilities as great as, if not greater than are the people on the north coast and in the extreme north of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: Fifty pounds of letters and a couple of passengers represent the great facilities you are talking about.

Mr. CORBOY: But will the hon. member deny that the boat service is not a great deal better than the boat service on the south coast?

Mr. Teesdale: The relative importance of the two places differs.

Mr. CORBOY: I admit that more trade is offering along the north coast, if that is any satisfaction to the hon. member, but it does not get over the fact that our disabilities are as great, and our distance from the seat of government is a great in point of time required to reach the capital. Yet the Government provide a special exemption for their four supporters from the North, while members sitting on the Opposition side, representing places labouring under equal disabilities, are brought under the operations of the measure. If it is just that the people on the south coast, with their difficulties, should have to put up with the representation that this Bill proposes, it is equally right that the North should get two members, which number it would be entitled to on the basis laid down for the outer goldfields.

Mr. Teesdale: Even your own crowd, in 1913, were satisfied to cut off the northern districts and not discuss them.

Mr. CORBOY: I have already said I consider the North entitled to more than two representatives, but I also claim that other portions of the State are entitled to equal consideration. I do not contend that the North should have two members only. It would be disastrous to the development of that great territory to have it so meagrely represented. But there are other districts on the south coast entitled to equal consideration and calling for investigation to determine their possibilities. The Government are expending a fairly considerable sum to open up a large area of arable land in the Esperance district. Some few weeks ago I mentioned that, running parallel with the south coast, from the Great Southern to the north of Esperance, is a belt of fine arable country well worth investigation at the hands of the expert officers of the department, and to which a small proportion of the money being devoted to the North might be profitably diverted. I do not grudge the North the money it is getting. I welcome the establishment of a group of settlers to test the possibilities of cotton growing in the North. I would welcome any other experiment to make the North a greater wealth producer than it is to-day. But I also desire that a little similar consideration be extended to other outlying portions of the State to assist in their development. Other portions of the State deserve efficient representation in this Parliament in the same way that the North is entitled to more than the proportion which the number of electors there would ordinarily give it. Under the provisions of the Bill it will be possible for a very small minority of the people to govern the country, while a huge majority was represented by the members in Opposition. If members go to the trouble to work out the details, they will find it possible for 26 members, representing only 62,000 electors, to control this House, while the remaining 24 members in Opposition represent 116,700 electors—only 8,300 short of double the number. Any Bill under which it is possible for such a grave anomaly as this to occur should not pass this Chamber.

Mr. Underwood: It would mean more seats in the metropolitan area.

Mr. CORBOY: The metropolitan area would require to have a greater number of seats to remedy that trouble. I do not wish it to be

thought from the interjection of the hon. member that I am advocating an increase in the number of members for that area. While the present position is not perfect, it will not be improved by having two-thirds of the electors of the country represented by the Opposition and one-third represented by those sitting on the Government side of the House. To-day we have the larger portion of the Government party in the coalition sitting on the cross benches, and a minority of members of the coalition who are the actual supporters of the head of the Government. There is a probability of an increase in the number of representatives of the party which mainly occupies the cross benches. That party is more and more drifting into a position which it delights in abusing. The iron hand of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association is entering into the political arena of this country, and tightening up the control. More and more do we find this executive saying, "Do as we say or we will render you liable to political extinction." Within the last month or so the Primary Producers' Association was guilty of an action that the Labour movement of this country would not for a moment tolerate, and has never considered. I am sure that the Minister for Mines will agree with me when I say that such a course was never in the thoughts of leaders of the Labour movement while he belonged to it. I refer to the expulsion of Mr. Hedges from the Country Party. The Labour Party has never been guilty of an action of that sort.

Mr. A. Thomson: What about the gentleman who recently represented East Perth?

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member may not relish it, but he cannot deny that Mr. Hedges was recently expelled from the Primary Producers' Association, which is the farmers' union, because he did not see eye to eye with the Country Party in politics.

Mr. A. Thomson: In just the same way a man cannot get work if he does not belong to a union.

The Minister for Mines: Both statements are entirely wrong.

Mr. CORBOY: That of the member for Katanning is wrong. It is amusing to listen to such a statement from one who professes to be something of a leader in his party. He suggests that if a man does not support the political Labour Party in Parliament, he cannot get a job at a bricklayer. That is what appertained in connection with Mr. Hedges.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

Mr. CORBOY: He has been expelled from the farmers' union because he does not support the Country Party.

The Minister for Mines: He can still continue to be a farmer.

Mr. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: If this Bill becomes law, there will be a greater representation in Parliament of agricultural interests. This may lead to the eventual subversion of Parliament to the control and domination of the executive which dared to deal in that way with Mr. Hedges. Anything that leads to such a position is dangerous to the country. An executive that is capable of doing that sort of thing should not be permitted to have anything to do with the Parliament of this State.

The Minister for Mines: It ought to be an offence against the law in the case of all parties.

Mr. CORBOY: I am quite willing that this should apply to the Labour movement, if it is made to apply generally. We have never suggested or thought of such a thing. We do not expel people from our industrial unions because they are not Labourites.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot permit this discussion to go on.

Mr. CORBOY: I am sorry you cannot grasp the connection between my remarks and the Bill. I must, however, bow to your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no desire to hamper the hon. member.

Mr. CORBOY: The object of the Bill, is to make provision for the better representation of the people of Western Australia in Parliament. It is impossible under any Bill of this nature to provide for the better representation of the people in Parliament. Under such a system it is quite possible for the large majority of the people to be represented by a minority in Parliament. It is time more effort was made to create a Parliament which will in every possible way be a true reflex of the opinions of the electors.

The Minister for Mines: How do you propose to do that?

Mr. CORBOY: It would be foolish to claim infallibility for any system, but I believe an efficient system of proportional representation would give effect to the desire I have.

The Minister for Mines: Not of itself.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister may combat my argument later on. Nothing would delight me more than that he should follow me and endeavour to controvert what I have to say.

The Minister for Mines: I must be the judge of that.

Mr. CORBOY: I have been surprised to note the marked continuity of silence which has reigned on the other side of the House. Even the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) was unable to goad the Minister for Works last night into making an interjection. Although members opposite have contended that the whip has not been put upon them, and that caucus did not insist upon unanimity on this question, they have apparently made up their minds either collectively or individually to refrain from giving any reasons for supporting this atrocious measure. Many of them would find the greatest difficulty in giving reasons, and most of them would be quite unable to justify the attitude they have taken up. When they go to their electors and are asked why they supported a measure which deprived them of representation, they will be unable to advance any reason for their action. If all the notes the Minister for Mines is making are to be the foundation of his reply, I can be assured of getting some answer to the arguments which have been put up against the Bill.

The Minister for Mines: I have not taken a single note of what you term your argument.

Mr. CORBOY: That is the Minister's fault; I hope it is not mine. The question of proportional representation is a controversial one. Members may find fault with some features of the method of electing re-

representatives under that system. For the election of members of Parliament, and of persons to municipal bodies, county councils, that system has been in use in various parts of the world for many years. It was first used in 1855—68 years ago.

Mr. Underwood: Are the people who use it any better than we are?

Mr. CORBOY: In the place where it was tried in 1855, in rather a crude form, it has been in operation for all these years. The system has been improved upon in various ways, but it is still in use.

Mr. Underwood: Our system is still in operation.

Mr. CORBOY: Ours is an unsatisfactory system. Despite the fact that it is still in operation the Commonwealth Parliament is endeavouring to evolve a method of satisfactory representation for the Senate, but so far without success. Everyone agrees that the Commonwealth Senate does not represent a true reflex of the opinions of the people under the present system of voting. It is ridiculous to say that because our system is still in operation it is better than something we have never tried.

The Minister for Mines: Are you speaking of one of the heads who missed the 'bus?

Mr. CORBOY: No. I was not in the running. Because we started a system and are still using it, it is idle to say that we should not try some other system.

Mr. Underwood: It is your own argument.

Mr. CORBOY: It is not. The place to which I refer previously used a system similar to ours, but dropped it in favour of the proportional representation system.

Mr. Underwood: You said it had been in use there for 65 years.

Mr. CORBOY: The other system must have given more satisfaction than ours. Throughout Europe the use of the system of proportional representation has spread until delegates and members of Parliament are now being elected under it. In order to make the position clear, I will quote from a volume I have here. This volume, by John Humphreys, deals exhaustively with the various methods of election. The author has evidently made a thorough study of the whole question, with the result that he has come to the conclusion that the most reasonable and effective way of giving true expression to the wishes of the people is the system of proportional representation. He says—

It cannot be a matter for surprise that the methods of election adopted in the early stages of representative institutions failed to respond to the needs of the more complex political conditions of highly civilised communities. The movement in favour of improved electoral methods is in keeping with the advances made in all other human institutions. We no longer travel by stage coach, nor do we read by rush light. We cross the Atlantic with a certainty and ease unknown and undreamt of a little while ago. Means of

intercommunication, the Press, the mail, the telegraph, the telephone, have developed marvellously in response to modern requirements. This continuous adaptation is the law of existence, and in view of modern political conditions we cannot permanently refuse to adapt our electoral methods to the more perfect organisation of a progressive democracy. By cumulative pressure, the evils set forth in the previous chapters have but one result. They will compel English statesmen, as they have compelled or are compelling Continental statesmen, to devise an effective remedy; and although individual politicians may resist and retard the advent of reformed methods, the demand for better representative institutions will in the end overcome all such resistance. What, then, are the requirements of a satisfactory electoral method? The evils to be remedied must yield the clue. Our present system has often, as we have found, resulted in a gross exaggeration of the majority, sometimes in the total suppression of the minority. . . .

May I here suggest that that has been proved true even in recent years with the methods which the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) supports. I refer to our Commonwealth Senate. I do not say that the hon. member advocates the present system as exemplified in the Senate, but he appears to be against any alteration.

Mr. Underwood: I do not defend the Senate at all.

Mr. CORBOY: I believe the hon. member would join with me in wiping out the whole concern. Some three years ago, however, we had the spectacle of 17 out of 18 members representing 47 per cent. of the electors of the Commonwealth being elected. One party had 17 out of 18 candidates returned, while the direct support of that party throughout the Commonwealth included only 47 per cent. of the voters. So that we have had quite recently, and in our midst, an example of the almost total extinction of the minority vote, despite the fact that the minority consisted of 44 per cent., or only three per cent. less than the people who secured 17 out of 18 seats. The author proceeds:—

and on other occasions in the return of a majority of representatives by a minority of the electors.

I have already pointed out that under the present Bill it is possible for one-third of the electors of this State to return a majority to this House.

These evils have happened when only two parties have been seeking representation. When a third party enters the political arena, the system completely breaks down, and all efforts to restore majority representation under a system of second ballots have proved an absolute failure. The attempts made in the past to secure the special representation of minorities, though most successful in many respects, have been of an empirical character, and have dealt

with the trouble in a very partial way. Yet it is not difficult to find a solution for all these troubles which is at the same time satisfactory and effective. It is only necessary to return to the first principles of democracy, to keep steadily in view the meaning of that self-government which we desire to achieve through representative institutions. Self-government can only be realised when every section of the community through its own representatives can give expression to its needs in the assembly which is representative of the nation, and which derives all its authority from the fact that it is so representative. This assembly acts in the name of the nation. Its decisions are said to embody the national will. But if any considerable section of the nation is deprived, from whatever cause, of representation in the House of Commons, in what sense can it be said that its decisions give expression to the national will? The new electoral conditions force us, willingly or unwillingly, to the conclusion that no satisfactory solution can be reached until effect is given to Mill's fundamental principle of democracy.

The Minister for Mines: I lost a great deal of my faith in that theory, because it did not stop the war in Europe.

Mr. CORBOY: It is easy for the Minister to wax sarcastic at the expense of a man who has devoted much time to the close study of this subject, and has stated his conclusions in a very broad-minded way. I invite the Minister, when I have finished, to get up and deal with the arguments advanced, and show what reasons he has for asserting that the author of this book is wrong.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say he was wrong.

Mr. CORBOY: In that case, why is not the Minister in favour of the author's conclusions?

The Minister for Mines: I did not say I was not in favour of them.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister, as usual, cannot be got to say anything definite.

Mill's fundamental principle of democracy—that the various sections of political opinion should be represented in the legislative chamber in proportion to their strength.

The Minister for Mines: Don Cameron used to read out that kind of matter.

Mr. CORBOY: I remember when the Minister used to look upon Don Cameron as a colleague.

The Minister for Mines: Before he was chased into a meat safe.

Mr. CORBOY: A crowd of hundreds hunted the man. What a beautiful spirit to applaud in a British community! I wonder the Minister is not ashamed to refer to the subject.

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

Mr. CORBOY: May I just remark that in connection with investigations on which the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) and I have

been engaged during this Parliament, we have had occasion to deal with one or two of the gentlemen who were prominent at that time in running down men of the Don Cameron type, and in boasting of their loyalty. We have had since to deal with them for their dealings with the soldiers. They were the type that hunted Don Cameron down.

Capt. Carter: Cameron did not boast of his loyalty, did he?

Member: Cameron was in the South African war.

Mr. CORBOY: The men I refer to have robbed the soldiers since they returned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow this discussion to proceed.

Mr. CORBOY: The author continues—  
Only in the fulfilment of that condition can we escape from the evils of the existing system, and at the same time do justice to the claims of three organised parties to representation in the House.

Hon. members will recognise the peculiar application of those remarks to the conditions now obtaining in this Chamber, where we have three definitely organised parties. All three parties seek representation here.

It is now no longer possible to accept Mill's declaration as theoretically perfect and then to dismiss it as wholly impracticable. If the political conditions are such that the proportionate representation of parties is the only satisfactory solution of our electoral difficulties, it becomes the duty of statesmen to find some way by which practical effect can be given to Mill's formula. There was doubtless some excuse for the cry of impracticability when, in launching, in 1857, his proposals for proportional representation, Thomas Hare suggested that the whole kingdom should form a single constituency. This suggestion raised a barrier of prejudice against all proposals for proportionate representation, which only to-day is being broken down, and led to a refusal to consider seriously any attempt to secure an amelioration of existing methods along more modest lines. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the first step in the direction of realising true representation must be the enlargement of our present electoral areas.

While agreeing with that, still one would not like to see every constituency grow to the size of the Kalgoorlie Federal electorate, for instance.

So long as single-member constituencies are retained, elections must necessarily take the form of a struggle for the whole of the representation allotted to the constituents. There is the one prize, a prize which is indivisible; and the proportional distribution of that prize is impossible. For a system of proportional representation the first requirement is the formation of constituencies returning several members. These electoral areas need not be formed in an arbitrary manner. Familiar divisions of the country, such as large

towns, counties, or parts of counties, may be treated as single constituencies. The author is now speaking of England, and he goes on to say:—

Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Leeds would form constituencies in themselves.

I was anticipating an interjection from my friend from Collie, in reference to my statement that Glasgow is in England. The author is speaking of the British Isles.

Mr. Wilson: England is in Glasgow.

Mr. CORBOY: Now we have the solution. Then he proceeds—

Counties which are large enough to return at least five members might also be treated as electoral areas, whilst the smallest counties would be grouped and the larger counties, if necessary, subdivided. With such constituencies it would be possible to approximate to a true representation of the electors. Birmingham, which may be taken for purposes of illustration, returns seven members to the House of Commons, one for each of its seven divisions. The Unionists being in a majority in each of these seven divisions, are enabled to secure the whole of the representation allotted to the city, although there is a large minority of non-Unionists. If Birmingham were treated as a single constituency, and if the electors were divided as follows: Unionists, 40,000; Liberals, 20,000; Labour, 10,000, then it is obvious that any just system of representation would enable the Unionists, Liberal and Labour electors to obtain four, two, and one members respectively. Birmingham would then be represented accurately and fairly within the House of Commons; and if each large area were so represented we should, in this way, be able to build up a House of Commons which would reflect in true proportions the political opinions of the country. The undoubted fairness of such a system of representation will appeal with even more force if consideration is given to the grounds on which seven representatives are now allotted to a town of the size of Birmingham. Did Birmingham contain only 40,000 electors, all of whom were Unionists, it would only be entitled to four representatives in Parliament. The presence of a large number of electors who are not Unionists brings, however, the total electorate to 70,000, and Birmingham is granted representation on the basis of this total. Thus the additional representation, granted because of the presence of a large minority of non-Unionist electors, takes the form of additional Unionist members. The minority under the present system is not only disfranchised but penalised; the representation which is due to them is given to their opponents.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the hon. member much more to read to explain his contentions?

Mr. CORBOY: There is a fair amount which I desire to read.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill does not deal with proportional representation.

Mr. CORBOY: No, but it provides for the better representation of the people of Western Australia in Parliament and I am endeavouring to show that in order to achieve that, the mere boundaries of the present electorates should not be altered as proposed in the Bill but in a way that would provide for the introduction of a system of proportional representation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member would be in order in putting that forward as something in favour of his point of view, but he is not in order in reading to the extent that he is doing.

Mr. LUTY: He is making a comparison.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member might read short paragraphs dealing with his points without reading at such length. However, the hon. member may proceed.

Mr. CORBOY: I shall endeavour to follow your wishes, Mr. Speaker, and will deal with paragraphs I have specially marked. Just to clean up the point which I made at the outset, in replying to an interjection by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), I would like to mention that the first application of the principle of proportional representation took place in Denmark so long ago as 1855, two years before the publication of Mr. Hare's scheme, when M. Andrae, a Danish Minister of great eminence and ability, introduced it in the new Constitution promulgated in that year. On that point, Humphreys states—

The system of proportional representation was retained through the Constitutional changes of 1863 and 1866.

That goes to show that it was a very long time ago that the principle was first applied in Europe. Its application was extended to the election of Parliamentary committees and committees of the municipalities of Copenhagen. The principle was also applied in 1903 to the elections of the Congregational councils, but its most notable extension was effected in 1908 when the system was applied to all municipal elections, the first elections having taken place in March, 1909. Proceeding this authority states—

It was not until 1890 that the first step was taken which has resulted in so rapid an extension of the system. The evils arising from the majority method of election had become so acute in the Swiss canton of Ticino that proportional representation was adopted as a means of classification. The elections of 1889 resulted in the return of 77 Conservative deputies by 12,783 votes, whilst the Liberals, with 12,166 votes were only able to obtain 35 representatives.

That was, instead of the representation being practically equal—

The Liberals alleged that this unfair result was due to a gerrymandering of the constituencies, and demanded a revision of the Constitution. The Conservative Government declining to take the necessary steps for this purpose, a revolution broke

out in Bellinzona, in the course of which one of the members of the Government was killed and his colleagues arrested and imprisoned. The Federal Council intervened and sent its representative, Col. Kunzli, who recommended the adoption of proportional representation.

The result was that proportional representation was adopted and proved so satisfactory that the revolution was nipped in the bud. People who were so dissatisfied with the election results as to rebel, became contented because the new method provided them with representation that was proper and fair. Proportional representation has been adopted in a number of other places but in deference to your wishes, Mr. Speaker, I will not go into details, beyond saying that in practically every instance where that method has been adopted, it has been retained with satisfactory results. The system has been adopted extensively in European countries and the fact that it has given satisfaction in nearly every instance should make it worthy, if not of adoption by the House at the present juncture, at least of a full and proper investigation to ascertain whether or not it would rectify the anomalous position with which we are confronted owing to our single constituencies and majority voting. It should be possible by a proper division of the State on a proportional basis such as five-member constituencies—I am not wedded to five-member constituencies, for the number, after all, is immaterial—to get a more true reflex of the opinions of the electors apparent in this Chamber. Under such a system it would be possible to show the people that their views were adequately and fairly represented in Parliament. Under such conditions the people would be content with the fact that the majority of the people had elected a majority of the members of this Chamber, and recognising that, they would not be entitled to complain. The Bill does not get over the difficulties which exist at the present time. If anything, it merely accentuates those difficulties by failing to remove them and I say advisedly that something should be done by the Government to ascertain whether some effective solution of the difficulty cannot be found, rather than be content with this patchwork business. If, after making due inquiries, the Government inform us that they are not satisfied that this system will remedy the difficulties we are confronted with, I shall be content with knowing that the Government are honestly convinced that the position would not be relieved by the adoption of proportional representation. Until such time as the Government have fully investigated this question, either by themselves or by means of a select committee, and determined the efficiency or otherwise of other methods than the single-member constituency system, I will not be content. In merely appointing Commissioners to alter the boundaries of a few electorates, the Government are tinkering with the position and are not remedying the evils and providing for the proper representation of the minorities throughout the State. The

Government are altering the boundaries of electorates because there has been a diminution in the number of the electors there, due to a small flow from the goldfields areas to the South-West. What is the good of that? In a few years' time, should there be a revival of mining, the people will flock back to the goldfields. Will the Government in those circumstances bring in a further measure and again deal with the electoral question, because of that shifting of the population from one part of the State to another? Will that be sufficient for the Government to again effect a redistribution of seats. It is only playing with the position. If a proper and effective system were provided whereby, whatever the number of the people in the different electorates might be, the majority and the minority each would have proper representation in Parliament, then the mere drifting of population from one portion of the State to another would not materially affect the effectiveness of the system. I hope some earnest effort will be made to find some more permanent solution of the difficulties now experienced in obtaining a reflex of the people's views, than is proposed in the Bill. I hope some endeavour will be made to place some such measure on the Statute Book and that we will not have the spectacle of the Government saying: "There are four of our supporters; we will not touch their seats. Here are four Opposition members; we will wipe them out."

Mr. MacCallum SMITH (North Perth) [3.44]: Nearly every member of the Opposition who has spoken on the Bill has prefaced his remarks by a reference to instructions given to members on this side of the House by the Premier. No such instructions have been given to members as to how they shall deal with the Bill. We have an absolutely free hand and it is a pure libel to say that any member sitting on the Ministerial side of the House has been given any instructions from the Premier or from any other Minister, as to the attitude he must adopt. I have three very strong objections to the Bill, and so I am going to vote against the second reading. First of all it is wrong to bring in an important measure of this sort at the tail end of the session. Such a Bill should have been brought down early in the session, so that members might have an opportunity to discuss it and give it proper consideration. What is the result of bringing in the Bill at this late stage of the session? Most of us are disinclined to discuss it in a proper way. There has been, shall I say, an element of stonewalling from members opposite.

Hon. P. Collier: Why, yesterday was the first day the Bill was really under discussion, yet we were chastised in the newspaper this morning for speaking to it at all!

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: There has been on the other side of the House a spirit of resentment against the measure. I do not blame hon. members there for the degree of stonewalling introduced to block the measure.



Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not justified in accusing members of stonewalling.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: Well, perhaps, it has not been stonewalling, but members opposite have spoken resentfully against the measure, and have not given it that fair consideration which it is entitled to receive. On the other hand, members on this side have not spoken to it in that exhaustive way which might have been expected. They have attempted to gloss over the measure, apparently having agreed that it is going to be passed.

Hon. P. Collier: Very few of them have spoken at all.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: It is most unfair to members to bring in so important a Bill at this stage of the session. The Bill ought to be referred to a select committee, so that it might be fully considered in all its bearings. I hope the Premier will even yet see fit to withdraw the Bill and bring it down again next session.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: That would remove one of my objections, certainly, but I hope the Premier will withdraw the Bill, bring it down again early next session, and submit it to a select committee. If that course were followed, we should get a perfect measure which would give satisfaction for many years to come. The second objection I have to the Bill is that it contains no proposal to reduce the number of members of the Assembly. It will be admitted that many members who contested the last election promised the electors that they would favour a reduction of Parliamentary representation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I pledged myself to reduce by 30 the members of another place.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: I certainly announced that I was in favour of a reduction of members. I am still in favour of it, for I maintain there are far too many for the volume of work to be done. It could just as well be done by 40 members.

Hon. P. Collier: It is usually done by about 10.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: I should like to see a substantial reduction in the number of members. The country can ill afford to pay a very large bill of costs for Parliamentary government. I am sorry the Premier has not provided for a reduction of members.

Hon. P. Collier: The corridor would be very lonely then.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: But the business of the country would proceed more rapidly, and the cost would not be nearly so heavy as it is at present. If only for that objection, I will vote against the Bill. But my greatest objection to it is that if carried in its present form it will give the Country Party entire control over the government of the country.

Mr. A. Thomson: Nonsense.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: It is not nonsense.

Mr. A. Thomson: Even under the Bill the metropolitan area will have 30 per cent. of the voting strength.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: In a House of 50 members, we shall have only 15.

Hon. P. Collier: Although you have more than half the total number of electors.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: We shall have one-third of the representation. To-day the tendency is for Country Party members to obtain control of the country seats.

Hon. P. Collier: And dictate to the Government.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: They obtain the representation of those country seats, and with all their ramifications of co-operative societies and the like, the Country Party will be securing a permanent hold upon those seats, with the result that we shall be controlled by that party. We have had an indication from several members as to what will happen if the Country Party get control. For instance, there was their threat about the trams. To-day the metropolitan area is provided with a shockingly inefficient water supply, and if the Country Party get control of the reins of government the metropolitan area will be absolutely neglected, if not altogether spoiled in the interests of the Country Party.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is not correct.

Hon. P. Collier: Half a mile of tramway could not be built but the Country Party threatened to turn out the Government over it.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: I am not prepared to vote for any measure which will give any party permanent control of the reins of government. Under the Bill the Country Party will, in all probability, attain that position, whereupon it will be good-bye to all semblance of fair treatment for the metropolitan area. One could understand it if, in the past, there had been any neglect of the country by metropolitan members. On the contrary, we have always treated the country very well, and provided it with all the money necessary to its development. The metropolitan area is fully awake to the potentialities of the country and the necessity for its proper development. Therefore there are no grounds for giving the Country Party more extensive powers than they have to-day.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Hickmott: It would be a poor look-out for the metropolitan area if anything happened to the country.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: We quite understand that the townspeople are living on the country, and that therefore it is to their own interests to see that the country is fully developed. But we, also, have interests, and if we are to place them in the hands of a party that have threatened what they will do if anything be done for the metropolitan area, what is going to happen to us?

Mr. A. Thomson: When did they threaten that?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: If the hon. member had been in his place when the Como tramway and other metropolitan works were being discussed, he would have heard it.

Mr. A. Thomson: The only exception we took to the building of the Como tramway was on the score that it was carried out contrary to the promise of the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: No, you took exception to the expenditure of any funds whatever in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Did we not have to give them a guarantee the other day that the railways would not be electrified without Parliament being consulted?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: All things considered, it is clear that I should be lacking in my duty to my constituents if I were to vote for the Bill. I can see the dangers ahead, and therefore I desire to intimate that I will vote against the Bill.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [3.58]: I have been astonished at the little interest taken in the debate by Government supporters. It seems to me that after all there must be some truth in the statement that a caucus meeting was held at which Government supporters agreed to put the Bill through without discussion. I am satisfied that country members have long looked forward to the time when such a Bill would be introduced with a view to handing over to that party the power they covet. They are content to sit silent behind the Government, rendering assistance by coming in and voting on divisions, in order that the Bill might be placed on the statute-book. Their sole desire is to build up the numerical strength of the Country Party on the floor of the House. The title of the Bill is "An Act to make provision for the better representation of the people of Western Australia in Parliament." The object of the Bill as regards the Country Party is to provide better representation for that party in this House. That can be safely left to the judgment of other parties and of the public, as members of the Country Party are prepared to remain silent while the Government force through this measure with a view to gaining power. That is the sole reason for their silence. Power they want, and under this Bill they hope to get it. Much has been said regarding the gold-mining industry being in a dying state.

The Premier: I said it was not.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Member after member on the Government side has made that statement.

The Premier: Not one of them.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, and the Premier heard it.

Mr. Hickmott: I thought you said they had remained silent and had not spoken.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I said members of the Country Party had remained silent. The Premier, to give a final kick to the mining industry, has made provision in this Bill to bring about unjust representation of the mining interests. Why is there a depression in the industry? It is not accidental. The war

took 6,000 men from the industry, and then there occurred an all round increase in the cost of production. Mining requisites went up and there were four increases in railway freights.

The Premier: We had to meet the cost of the railway award. Surely you do not object to the increase in wages!

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill will be a bad advertisement for the mining industry. The Premier has kicked the industry back by increasing railway freights, and now he is out to administer another kick by requiring a bigger quota for the Kalgoorlie electorates than for the agricultural districts.

The Premier: No, it is precisely the same.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier has only to refer to his own remarks on the second reading.

The Premier: The quota will be the same.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: This is a question of serious moment to the goldfields. There is no guarantee that there will not be another increase in railway freights and, by reducing the representation of the goldfields, the people in the industry will not be in a position to make their voices heard as effectively as at present. If it is heard, it will be disregarded, because the numerical strength of their representatives will have been reduced. It has been said that the water scheme will show a profit this year of £52,000.

The Premier: Will it?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier should look at his own Estimates. Yet there is to be no reduction to low grade propositions with a view to giving them an opportunity to live.

The Premier: There is no profit on it.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: In proportion to population, we cannot hope to hold the existing number of seats for the goldfields, but there is no justification for demanding a higher quota for Kalgoorlie and Boulder than for the electorate represented by the Premier himself.

The Premier: There will not be, either.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Why are not the supporters of the Government prepared to make a statement regarding their attitude to the Bill? They are satisfied to give it their silent support. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party did not get up until he was actually forced on to his feet by the remarks of members of the Opposition, and his speech contained no justification for the Bill. It is essential to the better representation of the people that there should be a redistribution of seats, but not on the lines laid down by this Bill.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are you in favour of giving the metropolitan area a preponderance of representation?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I favour giving the metropolitan area the representation it is entitled to.

Mr. A. Thomson: What is that?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Up to 15 members, and it would not then be over-represented.

Mr. Hughes: Our minimum is 19.

Mr. A. Thomson: Better make it 25.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The member for Katanning, belonging to the Country Party, is out to increase the Country Party's representation for the purpose of getting power. They are the dominant party on the Government side, and it is evident there has been an arrangement among the coalition to deprive certain portions of the State of their just representation.

The Premier: That is all nonsense.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Then why did not the Premier explain the Bill? If it means something other than his remarks on the second reading conveyed, why did not he make the position clear?

The Premier: I did explain it.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The people should be in a position to judge of the justification for the measure.

The Premier: The Bill is not what I say, but what the Bill says.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier in moving the second reading made a statement and now he says, "The Bill means something, but I meant something altogether different."

The Premier: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Then what is the meaning of the Premier's interjection?

The Premier: I say you can read the Bill.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: If the measure is enacted we shall be doing a grave injustice to the electors.

Mr. Mann: What portion of the electors?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The portion represented by the hon. member for one. The hon. member is one of the silent supporters of the Government, prepared to swallow anything. In my electorate the quota will be fixed at 3,400 against 2,800 for the Premier's electorate—

The Premier: No, probably less.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Despite the fact that Northam is within 70 miles of the metropolis, whereas my electors are approximately 400 miles removed.

The Premier: You know very well you are not stating a fact, because the quota will be 3,000.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: That is in "Hansard."

The Premier: It is not.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: If the Premier looks up "Hansard" he will see that my remarks are correct. Differential treatment will be meted out to the people in the mining areas as against those in the agricultural area.

The Premier: Far more representation.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: How can there be far more representation for the central mining area when a higher quota will be required there than in the Northam electorate? I have failed to find in the remarks of the Premier on the second reading any justification for dividing the goldfields into a central area and an outer mining area. What is the justification for providing a higher quota for the central area?

The Premier: Their representation will not be decreased, but will probably be increased.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier might be able to make that clear in his reply. The divisions will be made on the electoral rolls. Is there to be a cleansing of the rolls before the commission start work? The rolls were never in a worse condition than they are at present. Yet we are going to ask the commissioners to operate on these rolls to bring about a better representation of the people. It will be impossible to do that. The rolls must be cleansed before the commissioners will know on what lines to work. This Bill should not be permitted to pass the second reading. I agree with the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) who said the Bill should be referred to a select committee.

Mr. Davies: Will you vote for the second reading if 15 members are conceded for the metropolitan area?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: If proper representation were provided and the Bill were altered to give the commission an opportunity of suggesting an equitable redistribution of seats, I would support it.

Hon. P. Collier: The Country Party would not be so easily satisfied.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It has been said that 22 seats are to go to the country districts. What is going to become of the floating seat which has not yet been allotted?

The Premier: Kalgoorlie.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It cannot go to Kalgoorlie since the Premier has divided the goldfields areas into two sections. The goldfields will not get the additional seat. It will doubtless go to the party sitting silently behind the Government.

Mr. Mann: Do not you think it should go to the metropolitan area?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: If the hon. member thinks that why does he not make a statement to that effect?

Mr. Mann: There will be plenty of time in Committee.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: He may be cut out altogether there. He is quite satisfied to sit silently behind the Government and see an injustice done to the metropolitan area. If he believes the Bill is not in the best interests of his electors, no doubt he would rise to his feet and say so. Apparently he is prepared to support it and endorse an injustice to the electors in this part of the State.

Mr. Mann: Rather than amend the Bill, you desire to wreck it.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: What is the use of amending it? If the Government desire to provide better representation for the people, let them bring down a measure that will justify the title. We have not got it yet.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Possibly we shall hear the hon. member's opinion later on.

The Premier: You be content with voicing your own views; never mind about other people's.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I oppose the second reading in the interests of the people I represent.

The Premier: That is your only trouble, is it?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: What else am I here for? I am not going to support a Bill that will inflict injustice on the people of the goldfields.

The Premier: They have a full measure of justice.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you going to join the Country Party?

The Premier: I am going to serve the people of this country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is what we want to do.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: A number of seats are to be cut out from the outer goldfields. Compare that treatment with the North-West.

The Premier: Have you any photographs of them?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is not a matter of photographs. It is a question of those sitting behind the Premier and representing the North. They have exerted their influence over the Premier. Although there has been a reduction of about 1,400 votes during the last seven or eight years in the four northern constituencies there is to be no reduction in the representation. The depopulation of the outer mining areas was caused by the war, the high cost of mining requisites, and four lifts in railway freights. Notwithstanding this the people there are to be deprived of representation. The Bill will inflict injustice upon the electors. People representing commercial interests and manufacturing businesses say they want to abolish industrial unrest. We expect people to obey the laws of the country, but if we disfranchise them as it is proposed by this Bill to do, we are looking for trouble.

The Premier: You find it often enough without looking for it.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Government are looking for it. The people of this State are expected to obey the law.

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The workers are expected to obey the industrial laws. The Premier has brought down a Bill to provide for a system of representation in Parliament that is thoroughly unjust.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is very much fairer than the present system.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a poor recommendation.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member admits that the present representation is not just. Because this Bill is said to be an improvement, the hon. member thinks it should be accepted. We want a Bill that will do justice to all the electors, and not one that will hand over to the Country Party two additional seats, because they are all the time asking for them. They are in a position to dominate the Government.

The Premier: Suppose you took them away from the farmers and gave them to someone else.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We want to give the people as a whole true representation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think a proportion of two to one in favour of the country is good enough?

The Premier: That is not so.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: What is to be done with the floating seat?

The Premier: I am not conscious that there is one.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill should be referred to a select committee.

The Premier: Surely 50 members can say what they want.

Mr. Lutey: Many of them say nothing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We want to do justice to the electors. What does the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) think?

Mr. Davies: I will follow you.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Is he prepared to hand to the Country Party by Act of Parliament power to dominate Parliament?

Mr. A. Thomson: Why this fear of the Country Party?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is the whining party in Western Australia. It always has its hands out. It reminds me of the Treasurer.

The Premier: I am paying out more wages all the time to people who are employed. That is what you object to, I suppose.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier is always reaching out for more revenue, but the people who have to pay are to be deprived of representation. The hands of the commissioners are to be tied.

The Premier: Say what you want. I do not know what it is.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I do not want this Bill.

The Premier: That is nothing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is something. I want a Bill giving fair representation to the people.

The Premier: What do you want us to do?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I want a Bill taking into consideration interests and distance from the capital. The Premier is uncomfortable and uneasy.

The Premier: I am not.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: He is not satisfied with his own Bill.

The Premier: I am perfectly satisfied.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: He is appealing to members on this side to know what they want.

The Premier: I want you to know what you want.

Mr. Davies: He is being quite fair.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: He wants to get this Bill through.

The Premier: But you have not objected to anything in it.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I object to the whole Bill. Is the Premier prepared to continue the four seats for the North?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Three members would be quite sufficient for that number of electors.

The Premier: Why not one?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am taking into consideration distance from the capital. I believe in dealing justly with the electors in all parts of the State. I hope the Bill will be rejected on the second reading.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [4.25]: I am not over-enthusiastic regarding this Bill.

Mr. Marshall: You are doubtful which way you are going.

Mr. DAVIES: I can cast my mind back to at least three attempts which have been made in this Chamber to bring down a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Like many of those sitting in opposition, I was opposed to the Redistribution of Seats Bill of 1913. I have a map of that famous gerrymandering proposal, which showed what Governments were capable of when they desired things to go in their own direction. I have compared this Bill with the 1913 Bill, which was brought down by the united Labour Party. It is an improvement on the 1911 Bill, but I am bound to confess that in several directions this new Bill and the 1913 Bill are alike.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In what way?

Mr. DAVIES: In respect of the North-West for instance. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) asked if the Government left out the North-West for the purpose of retaining those members as Government supporters. In 1911 three out of the four seats were held by Labour men.

Mr. Munsie: The Bill provided for only three seats.

Mr. Mann: The Gascoyne was not included.

Hon. P. Collier: We cut down the North-West.

Mr. Marshall: Why has the Murchison been excluded from the North-West, although from the Government point of view I am part of it?

Mr. DAVIES: I have examined the position to see what reason there is for the opposition to this Bill. The Roebourne seat was held by Mr. Gardiner, Pilbara by the present member, and Gascoyne by Mr. McDonald. I think Mr. Male was the only non-Labour member representing the North.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would have been to our advantage to have kept the four seats intact, but we did not do so.

Mr. DAVIES: Some say it was not intended they should remain intact. Three of the members supported the Government of the day. No member representing the outback goldfields would support a Bill for redistribution on the population basis. Under such a scheme half of the representation of the State would be in the metropolitan area, which would be distinctly unfair to the country districts. My first impression of the Bill was that it was not worth bothering about to take four seats from the outback mining areas, and divide them equally between the metropolitan area and the country districts. I have sufficient faith

in Parliament to know that once a measure is taken into Committee, there are men with enough sense to realise the difference between right and wrong in their endeavour to do what is best for the country. That is why I want the second reading of the Bill carried. It is the duty of members of Parliament to see that such a result is achieved and that some proper basis of representation is arrived at. If any hon. member heard the speeches read dealing with the 1913 measure, without knowing the names of the speakers, they would swear that they were by hon. members of this Chamber, for the opposition raised to the present measure is similar to that raised against the 1913 Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When you talk of the 1913 Bill, you must take into consideration the electoral rolls as well.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Unless you do that, you cannot compare the Bills.

Mr. DAVIES: We are dealing with the main point and that is, that we require an equitable distribution of seats. If we are to do that, we must arrive at it by a process of elimination. It has been agreed apparently that the North-West must be represented by three members, if not by four.

Mr. Marshall: What is the difference between the electorate of Gascoyne and the Murchison electorate?

Mr. DAVIES: I have followed the debate on the Bill closely and I think it has been accepted by the House generally that at least three seats should be allowed for the North-West. The next point raised was as to whether we should have one vote one value. As a member representing a metropolitan constituency, I might perhaps agree to that, seeing that the metropolitan area would get 50 per cent. of the representation in Parliament on that basis. Even the most optimistic member representing a metropolitan constituency would not say that we should have a redistribution of seats on a population basis and thus secure for the metropolitan area 50 per cent. of the Parliamentary representation! I will not go over the ground that has been traversed by some hon. members in saying that the Country Party members are antagonistic to the metropolitan area and that the metropolitan area is antagonistic to the country.

Mr. A. Thomson: They are not.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course they are not. Each part of the State is necessary to the other. It is no use washing our dirty linen in public.

Mr. Harrison: We have no dirty linen to wash.

Mr. DAVIES: A good deal has been washed. It is a waste of time for the Country Party to throw off at the metropolitan area, and for metropolitan members to throw off at the agricultural districts.

Mr. Harrison: We are not doing that.

Mr. DAVIES: I regret it has gone forth from this Chamber that members sitting on

the Government side of the House have been instructed as to how they are to vote.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is absolutely absurd.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course it is.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I say it is true.

Mr. A. Thomson: It is not true.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is true. I know you were.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you have not been instructed, there are liars on that side of the House. Take it that way if you like.

Mr. DAVIES: No such thing has occurred. We are not bound in the slightest degree and the truth of that is witnessed by what occurred in this House last night.

Mr. Hughes: Do you think it right that six persons in the metropolitan area should be required to equal one in the North-West?

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know.

Mr. Hughes: I asked you if you thought it was right.

Mr. DAVIES: If the House agrees—and I have not heard even the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) say that we should have it—that one vote must have one value, that is quite all right. He did not say that, however.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the question. There is a difference between one vote one value and what you were asked.

Mr. Hughes: Don't you think that five in the city to three in the country should be a fair basis?

Mr. DAVIES: I admit what the Leader of the Opposition says, but when one is prepared to go as far as the other, and the other is—

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the point. You were asked if you approved of a six to one variation and you answered by a reference to one vote one value. You know that is no answer.

Mr. DAVIES: That is the point. We can say what we like on these various points but the question is, what is equitable?

Hon. P. Collier: The point is, what is reasonable?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the attitude we take.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. I have a distinct recollection that one hon. member sitting on the Opposition side of the House said that he favoured one vote one value.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said so, under certain conditions.

Mr. DAVIES: There are some members who could not possibly subscribe to that principle, including those representing the outback goldfields areas.

Hon. P. Collier: How do you know that?

Mr. DAVIES: It would not be fair for members representing the metropolitan area to subscribe to that principle. Would it be fair for us to secure 25 or 26 seats to the exclusion of the representation of outback parts?

Mr. Hughes: But there is a difference between a representation of 24 and of 16.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so, but the question is where can we meet and agree?

Mr. Hughes: It has been suggested that the metropolitan representation should be 19.

Mr. DAVIES: That is the point at which we want to arrive. A Bill dealing with a redistribution of seats should not be a party measure and cannot be made such, if members are prepared to treat each other fairly and equitably. Whatever appeals to the House as a whole, whether the initiative be taken from one side of the House or the other, as fair and just, should receive the support of hon. members. That is the position we have come to. Last night it was suggested that the metropolitan members would be satisfied with a representation of 15 members. Where did any metropolitan member get his mandate to make such a statement?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I for one would not agree to that. I think we should have 17 and the Swan electorate should be included.

Mr. DAVIES: If the second reading of the Bill be carried, there will be a chance to make the measure more equitable than it is at present.

Mr. Hughes: Then you admit that it is not equitable?

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. DAVIES: I think the hon. member should have gathered that from my remarks. I say unhesitatingly that if it is only a question of taking four seats from the back country mining areas and giving two to the country districts and two to the metropolis, it is not worth bothering about, so far as the metropolitan and agricultural representatives are concerned.

Mr. Lutey: Do you think it is fair to take four from the mining districts?

Mr. DAVIES: It is assumed that that will take place. The commissioners certainly are cramped under the Bill to a certain extent.

Hon. M. F. Troy: The Premier made the definite statement in introducing the measure that the four seats would be taken away from the goldfields districts.

The Premier: I gave the figures on a population basis.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must take the Bill as it is placed before us and not deal with assumption.

Mr. DAVIES: Member after member has spoken on the point.

Mr. Hughes: That refers to the goldfields and they want to get those four seats.

Mr. DAVIES: How do you know that?

Mr. Hughes: I will bet you a new hat that the goldfields do not retain their seats.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: That is an answer to give! We can bet on what we like.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not here.

Mr. DAVIES: I will vote for the second reading of the measure and I hope it will be

altered in Committee in accordance with the wishes of hon. members, including myself, who think that there should be a more equitable distribution than is proposed in the Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.40]: I regret very much that it has been necessary to introduce an Electoral Districts Bill, more particularly as it appears to affect the goldfields areas. No one regrets more than I do that the prosperity of the goldfields has declined. It is astounding, however, to hear hon. members representing the goldfields areas, and even those representing metropolitan seats as well, contending that the Bill has been brought forward to favour the representation of the Country Party in this House. I am not aware that the Bill has been submitted in the interests of any particular party at all.

Mr. Lutey: We have seen this trick played in Victoria.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There is no trick about it, and I give an emphatic denial to the statement that the Country Party desired the introduction of the Bill. I am not very favourably disposed towards it at all. If I followed my personal inclination, I would leave matters as they are.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Then whose inclination are you following?

Mr. A. THOMSON: We have to support the Bill before the House.

Hon. P. Collier: Why have you to support it? If you prefer to leave things as they are, you should vote against the Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is so, and personally I would prefer to leave the goldfields representation alone if that were possible. Opposition members themselves have admitted that there must be a redistribution of seats and that it is not reasonable to expect the goldfields, with their small number of electors, to retain their present representation, when a comparison is made with the other electorates with their larger proportion of voters. I congratulate the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) on his references to the relations between parties in this House. There is no necessity for reflections to be cast upon the various sections. It is remarkable how members of the Opposition have shown a desire to criticise the members sitting on the Government cross-benches.

Mr. Harrison: Libelling them!

Mr. A. THOMSON: They have accused us of having some mysterious influence on the Government and a dark desire to control the affairs of this State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And have you not that desire?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I regret that attitude. If the electors of the State give us the necessary majority at any election, I presume that we will be as much entitled to assume the reins of office as would be the Labour Party in the event of Labour being returned at the election.

Hon. P. Collier: Only a majority! Why Page wants a majority in the Federal Cabinet and he has only 14 members out of 75.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is a tribute to his courage.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that courage? Some people would call it by another name.

Mr. Munzie: Some people would call it sheer impudence.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition, in replying to an interjection, said that in the 1913 Bill it was provided that three seats should be allocated to the North-West above the Tropic of Capricorn and that that included the Gascoyne electorate. If he looks at the map he will find that Gascoyne is south of the Tropic of Capricorn. Therefore the present Bill is practically at all fours with the Bill of 1913.

Mr. Teesdale: But there were three Labour members in Parliament representing those constituencies then.

Mr. Chesson: Kimberley was not represented by a Labour member.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It was said that the reason for the Bill was to secure the position of Government supporters.

Hon. P. Collier: They were not three Labour seats. Kimberley was not held by Labour.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Even the Opposition who have had so much to say against this Bill admitted in 1913 the justice of the principle that the North should have better representation than the number of votes actually entitled it to.

Hon. P. Collier: We admit it now.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That being admitted, there is some good in the Bill. As regards the fear of the Opposition that the Country Party may gain two seats, I believe that the Labour Party will capture those seats. Assume there is a new seat in the Great Southern, the port of Albany district will become a present to the Labour Party. The member for Kalgoorlie should welcome this change.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it your standard that we should judge the Bill purely in that way?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am merely replying to the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie. I am not suggesting that as a reason for supporting the Bill. The member for Kalgoorlie said I was anxious that this Bill should be passed. Is he prepared to support the suggestion of the member for East Perth that the metropolitan area should have 19 seats? In the interests of good government and the progress of the State, the metropolitan area should not dominate. I was pleased to hear the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith) say that we are dependent on one another. Those who represent country districts know what a large area members have to cover. I appeal to members of the Opposition representing large constituencies like mine to consider this point. We are quite sincere in our desire that the men who are opening up and developing the goldfields should have as good representation as we are claiming.

Mr. Cunningham: Are you opposing the second reading of the Bill?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No. It is not in the interests of the State to set the country against the city or vice versa. If we are to

progress, city and country must pull together.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Have not metropolitan members been looking after the country districts?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Generally speaking they have been willing to support anything making for the development of the country, but it has also been in their own interests to do that. The whole of the money spent in the country districts has given an adequate return to the State. There has probably been a percentage of bad debts, owing to the enormous amount of money expended in opening up the wheat belt and pastoral areas, but members should consider the wealth that those areas have created. In the South-West we have a large area of virgin land which the Premier says will become of great value to the State. What is its value to-day? Has it any value? Is it producing anything for the State? Is it helping to pay our debt? It is not contributing one farthing to the revenue. But when we settle this land, and it is cleared, developed and made productive, it will become a valuable asset. I hope metropolitan members will recognise with members of the Opposition, that it is only just to give the North four members. I trust they will recognise also that it is not reasonable to insist on one vote, one value. When Western Australia is as thickly populated throughout as the metropolitan area now is, I shall be in favour of the principle of one vote one value.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: You will be dead and buried before that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Well, others may then affirm that principle. Look at the curious anomaly in our Federal representation. Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland are dominated by New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. Underwood: And they have twice the representation in the Senate.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are practically dominated by the large cities of Sydney and Melbourne. Perth has one representative, Fremantle has one representative and there is one each for Dampier, Forrest and Swan. Then we have one other member representing the whole of the balance of the State, the largest electorate in the world. Can one man possibly represent such a large area and do it justice? It is grossly unfair and inequitable to expect it. The question of the Como tramway has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: No; I do not see how you can bring that in.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But the subject was introduced by the member for North Perth.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow any discussion on it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I wish briefly to refer to his statement. He referred to the fear of the metropolitan area being dominated by the Country Party, and said we were opposed to the spending of money on trams.

What we did object to was the fact that the Premier and the Minister gave a definite promise—

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss that. It has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I merely wish to point out that members of the Opposition took exception to the Government breaking a promise.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to continue that discussion.

Mr. Munsie: Did not your deputy Leader say that if he had his way the metropolitan area would not get one extra member? Was he voicing the opinion of your party?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He was merely expressing his own opinion. That statement does not reflect the opinion of the Country Party.

Mr. Munsie: I am glad to hear you do not agree with it. I know he is pretty conservative, but I thought he was voicing the opinion of the Country Party.

Mr. Latham: When the Leader of the Country Party is here, I do not speak for the party.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I did not intend to speak on this Bill, but so many members of the Opposition said we were not game to voice our opinions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are game at any time.

Mr. Munsie: I did not think you were; you were chastised into speaking.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The "Statistical Abstract" shows that out of the total wealth of £13,628,000 produced in 1919-22, primary products such as wool, hides, and skins, tanning bark, wheat, flour, meat and fruit represented approximately £9,180,000 or about 70 per cent. of the total.

Mr. Underwood: But even the navy creates wealth.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I admit that every man working performs a very necessary and useful function.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The sheep produce the wool.

Mr. Lutey: And the blackfellow who shepherds them.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But crops require attention, and cows require to be milked irrespective of whether the farmer works 50 or 60 hours a week. Any farmer or business man who has made progress did not do so by working 44 or 40 hours a week. Only by persistent hard work can a man lay the foundations of wealth.

Mr. Marshall: Backed by the generosity of the State in many cases.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not know much about that. As a representative of a country district, I maintain that the farmers have had to pay and are quite willing to pay for the services which the Government have rendered them.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the Bill. I cannot allow the hon. member to ramble all over the place.



Mr. A. THOMSON: I am trying to stress the fact that those living in country districts are entitled to a larger quota than those in the metropolitan area should have.

Mr. Marshall: A smaller quota, you mean.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, if that will satisfy the hon. member. I intend to vote for the second reading, and I trust that the fears expressed by hon. members opposite will be realised, and that we as a party will come back stronger instead of weaker.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.2]: I do not intend to detain the House very long in dealing with the Bill, but I wish to have a word or two to say about the extraordinarily rash statements made by the member for Leederville (Capt Carter). In his characteristic way he quoted various constituencies, but unfortunately for him he declared that he did not see why an electorate like Hannans should have nine times the representation of Leederville, that is to say that he was representing nine electors to my one. I do not know where he got his figures, but the actual facts prove that the hon. member is out only to the extent of 3,552. If this comparison which he made can be taken as a criterion of the accuracy of the other arguments he used, I shall not go very much on the statements he made. What worries me most in connection with the Bill is the hard and fast conditions laid down for the guidance of the Commission. It is all very well for the Premier and hon. members to say when the work of the Commission is completed a report will be presented to Parliament, and that then we shall have the right to discuss the work of that body. But the Commission has not a chance to do justice to itself under the terms of the Bill. There is not sufficient discretionary power given to the Commission, and again in my opinion, there are too many divisions provided for. A good deal has been said by nearly every speaker regarding the amount and value of production. I claim that if members are going to use the argument that the amount of wealth produced will entitle people to representation, then the central goldfields area will need to get at least eight members. But the wealth that is actually being produced today has nothing to do with the matter. I want a redistribution of seats Bill drafted and put into operation which represents the men and women of the State.

Mr. Davies: Will any Government do that unless Parliament does it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want Parliament to do it. I believe alterations can be and will be made when the Bill reaches the Committee stage. But I also believe that it will not be possible to alter the divisions already set out in the Bill.

Mr. Davies: Why not?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not think hon. members will agree. The Premier will get a majority that will stick to him.

Mr. Davies: The difference is that it will be the opinion of Parliament and not of

Cabinet; and that is the most important point.

Mr. MUNSIE: If that is so and each member votes according to his convictions I agree with the hon. member. Taking the statistics of last year I find that the people living in the four electorates composed now in the central goldfields area produced £1,589,353 worth of gold, and they also produced over £500,000 worth of wealth in addition to that gold. If hon. members intend to argue from the standpoint of the amount of production, we on the goldfields will require considerably more representation than the Bill will permit us to have. The latest report of the Mines Department gives the actual number of men employed above and below ground in the mining industry in that area, and the wealth produced per man. There are 2,745 men employed in those four electorates and they produced nearly £580 per man. I am leaving out the fractions. But as I have said, that production should not enter into the argument at all. Those men are fortunate in working where the lodes are large and in some cases fairly rich. The result is that the amount of wealth produced has been considerable. But in any redistribution of seats Bill, I do not care which Government introduces it or which Parliament sanctions it, the quota should be less the further you get away from the seat of Government and the more difficult of access the electorate is. I am not going to admit that the production in a given area should count in a Bill such as this.

Mr. Harrison: That is what does count.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, with the hon. member, but with me it does not. No matter which party may be in power, I do not believe they would be doing justice to Western Australia, as it is at present constituted, unless they made special provision for the representation of the North-West. It is a country of immense distances and hard to get at, and there is no question about it that the North-West is separated from the rest of the State, not by miles but by hundreds of miles. Therefore I consider special provision should be made for that part of the State. But we can overdo the granting of special concessions. The Bill provides that where we now have nine electorates in the outer goldfields there are to be five. Regarding the numbers on the roll at the present time, I agree with what was said by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cunningham), who declared that the rolls were never in a more deplorable condition. I believe that applies generally. But those nine seats reduced to five, even on the present rolls pan out at 1,874 per electorate. I am including the electorates of Murchison and Cue and right through the goldfields to Esperance. When we take the four North-West seats we find that the average including Gaseoyne, which in my opinion, is a more accessible electorate than Murchison—

Mr. Teesdale: You are wrong there. What about the 300 miles from the coast line without a break?

Mr. Lutey: You have flying machines.

Mr. Teesdale: They travel along the coast and that is no good to anybody.

Mr. Marshall: I represent the furthest inland town of any consequence in the State.

Mr. Teesdale: You only think you do.

Mr. Marshall: That is more than the hon. member ever did; he has not the mental capacity to think.

Mr. MUNSIE: The four North-West seats include Gascoyne and Kimberley, and in the latter are the employees of the Wyndham Meat Works who are not entitled to vote. These people are in the unfortunate position that they cannot vote because they have been away for more than one month, and they cannot vote down here either because their names are not on the roll in the southern part of the State. But with their names included on the Kimberley roll, the quota is brought up to only 1,065 per electorate. Personally I think Gascoyne should have been taken in and the State divided into 47 instead of 46, and the other three electorates divided to make the three seats for the North-West. That would have been a fairer representation. Take the division as provided for in the Bill. The Premier said by way of interjection that the Bill provided for the same quota for the central goldfields areas as it did for the agricultural area. That is not so, nor is that shown to be the case in the Bill. The Premier may believe that is what will happen, but it cannot eventuate under the Bill. The Premier admitted that the quota would be higher in the central goldfields area than it would be in the agricultural areas. The Bill itself provides for a higher quota in the goldfields than in the agricultural area. The Northam electorate which the Premier represents is fairly compact. It is about 60 miles from Perth and has a service of three trains daily. The furthest out-point of that electorate, I do not think will be more than 100 miles from Perth. I undertake to say that the most southern portion of my own electorate—where there is population and mining, and which I have to get to somehow regularly—is at least 420 miles from Perth by the nearest route. And yet I am to represent a larger quota distant over 400 miles from Perth than the Premier is to represent at Northam, within 100 miles of Perth. That is not fair. But there are worse anomalies. Take Swan and Murray-Wellington. Both those constituencies should have larger quotas than central goldfields electorates. They are close to the seat of government, and the people in them live under better conditions than the people on the goldfields.

The Minister for Works: Many of my electors reside 25 to 50 miles from a railway.

The Colonial Secretary: The point is that the electors in both those constituencies are primary producers.

Mr. MUNSIE: What are my electors if they are not primary producers? The only industry in my electorate besides goldmining is the pastoral industry. There are not many hotels in my electorate—only five, although Hannans is a scattered electorate. The system of division proposed by the Bill is unfair. If the boundaries were wiped out and the commission permitted to vary as much as the Bill proposes, a much better job would be made of redistribution than we have in this Bill.

Mr. Mann: But we would not be in a position to debate the commission's report as we can debate this Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: Oh, yes! I have never yet known a redistribution of seats, either State or Federal, in which shortly after its enactment there was not discovered some great anomaly. Our last State redistribution cut out one of the five seats of the goldfields area. The object, according to the Attorney General, who introduced the Bill, was to provide 4,500 electors in each of the four central goldfields electorates. The number of electors there was sufficient to do it. So-called experts were instructed to reconstruct the five electorates into four, with 4,500 electors in each. The Bill went through after Christmas, and the general election took place in August, and at that election it was found that Kalgoorlie had over 6,000 electors, Boulder over 6,000, Brownhill-Ivanhoe 5,500, and Hannans less than 3,000. That was the result of the work of experts who made five seats into four. Similar anomalies, though perhaps not so great, will occur in the work of the proposed commission. If the commission were told, "In the outback districts you can vary to the extent of 50 per cent. relatively to the metropolitan area," they would make a far better and fairer job than this Bill of the representation of the people in Parliament. Much has been said about proportional representation, irrespective of whether it enters into this discussion or not. My personal view is that no one can argue against the fairness of proportional representation; but again let me say that in no State in the world would proportional representation be more difficult to put into operation than here in Western Australia. The Bill, however, provides for single electorates, and not for proportional representation. Let me show how the existing boundaries have had an ill effect on the Bill. Take the goldfields outer area, with five members to represent 1,874 electors each. The goldfields central area, with four members, will have, on present enrolments an average of 3,420 voters. If the existing boundaries were wiped out and the two areas amalgamated, there would be a representation of 2,561 voters for each goldfields member. And yet under this measure Swan at the back door of Perth, is to have a quota of 2,600. Is that fair? I say we should not pass a Bill which makes such a thing possible. There has been some argument as to where the floating seats are going, with regard to the whole of the goldfields. I

know of no seats floating about. The Premier was pretty definite in his statement and his figures. Four seats are to be taken from the outer goldfields area, and two of them are to be given to the metropolitan area and two to the country districts. By interjection the Premier has expressed the opinion that the extra seat may go to the inner goldfields. In my opinion, however, that will not be so. I know I am prophesying, but I do not believe that in the next five years the goldfields will ever reach so low an ebb as that to which they had fallen recently. I believe a little prosperity is coming to the goldmining industry throughout Western Australia. There is every sign of it. The Press are not making much of the matter, and I am glad of it, because I do not want to see another boom like the Hampton Plains boom, which did much harm to our goldmining industry. At present there is an active market, and plenty of money is available for decent shows. Twelve or 18 months ago one could not get a buyer to look at a show unless it was a jeweller's shop. To-day a decent show will bring a dozen applicants for an option. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill because I am satisfied that the Government will not permit the boundaries to be altered. If the boundaries were altered, the Government would drop the Bill. Possibly the quota might be lifted, but the boundaries will not be changed. In my opinion the Government would do well to withdraw the Bill and to introduce a measure laying down quotas—the quotas in this Bill, if desired—but wiping out the boundaries and giving the commission a free hand to draw them as the commission think fit. Thus, I consider, much better results would be achieved.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.28]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. In my opinion the measure strikes at the root of representative government. Australia has been fighting for democratic representation since its earliest days. Originally the constitutions of the Colonies were on a property franchise. That gave way to manhood suffrage, which in turn was followed by adult suffrage. George Higinbotham years ago brought the question of adult suffrage before the Victorian Parliament. Although the first State to have the system proposed to it, Victoria was the last to adopt it. The success of the effort for the adoption of the Federal Constitution was due to the fact that that Constitution gave the people better representation than they had had previously. I am perfectly convinced that the present Bill, instead of advancing Western Australia, would throw the State back. As regards representation of the various parts of the State, I understand from my oath that I represent not only the electors of Brownhill-Ivanhoe, but the whole of the people of this State, and particularly the working men and women, irrespective of what portion of Western Australia they may be living in. When I speak of the working men and women I

am not referring only to those who work with pick and shovel, but to all actual producers. The records of this Chamber show that goldfields members are not dominated by parochial instincts, as some members have shown themselves to be. I advise the abandonment of all parochial feelings, so that we may obtain better representation of the people than is possible under this Bill. The greatest blot on the measure is the goldfields central area, with 3,313 electors to be represented by each member, as against the figure of 2,863 in the agricultural area, although Kalgoorlie is 400 miles distant from the capital. That is absolutely unfair. The Premier has denied it, but if members will turn up "Hansard," on page 1791, they will find it there recorded. Moreover, goldfields members, although living so far from the seat of Government, are to have each 550 more electors than will agricultural members, notwithstanding that the Swan electorate is within eight or nine miles of the Perth Town Hall. Even if the second reading be carried, I believe, from the speeches already made, we shall be able to rectify that anomaly in Committee. In the North-West 4,257 electors are to have four seats, whereas the whole of the goldfields, central and outlying, with 10 seats, will have 2,300 voters in each electorate, or 881 more than would be necessary to return a member for the North West if they were given three. It has been clearly pointed out that the inconveniences and hardship of representing outback goldfields are just as great as those attending the representation of the North-West. Yilgarn runs right through to Ravensthorpe, and is a most awkward electorate to cover. Kanoona runs right away to Esperance and out to the South Australian border. It is a widely scattered electorate containing many small mining camps, which, however, are bound to develop. It is quite on the cards that there will be a large influx of people into that electorate; indeed the prospects are wholly in support of increased population throughout the goldfields. There is generally shared a positive feeling that the gold-mining industry is about to enjoy a distinct revival. Practically all the existing mines are looking better to-day than for many years past, while very many new shows are being opened up. The member for York (Mr. Latham) declared that mining and farming could not be represented by one member, that like oil and water the two would not mix. The hon. member forgot, or was unaware, that in this House we have had many representatives of mining who have done good service for people in agricultural centres. The Labour Government, consisting almost exclusively of goldfields members, did more for the farmers than did any other Government. How the hon. member could have seriously made so absurd a remark, passes my comprehension. I fancy he must have intended it as one of his rural jokes. People generally throughout the State have learned to expect a fair deal from mining representatives. I hope the second

reading will not be carried. If it should be, I with others will endeavour to drastically amend the Bill in Committee.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.25]: So much has been said relating to the Bill that all its provisions have been pretty well traversed. Still, I wish to deal with one or two points pertaining more particularly to my own electorate. I agree with those members who have entered a protest against the bringing down of so important a Bill at so late a stage in the session.

The Premier: It is very early in the year.

Mr. MARSHALL: Such a Bill, touching the most jealously cherished privilege of the elector, coming along at so late a stage in the session, does not do the Government credit. It is strange that when the Opposition endeavoured to give the public some idea of what is proposed in the Bill, they should be held up to ridicule by the Press. It appears to me the Press is merely the paid mouth-piece of a certain section of the community, whose views it will express at all times, even though by so doing it may hurt the State. The Press merely puts forward a policy, as it did this morning, unwarrantably ridiculing the Opposition. I am very sorry this should have been done. I cannot subscribe to the theory of one vote one value, at all events, not in respect of the Bill. All things being equal, I would be prepared to support that principle, but in existing circumstances it would not be workable. In the Bill the Government have departed from the giving of consideration to community of interests and distances from the seat of Government. Moreover, they have shown a desire to water down the representation of the goldfields by raising their quota above what is required of electors situated much closer to the city. From my point of view that is practically the only unredemptive feature of the Bill. I do not propose to argue that the producers of wealth should have preference over those engaged in distribution and exchange. I am doubtful whether such an argument, taken on an economic basis, would stand the test of investigation. I do not see, for instance, why primary producers should be entitled to say, "We produce the wealth and so we should have better representation in Parliament than have the people of the city." As I say, on an economic basis, that theory will not stand inquiry. The farmer can produce his wool and his wheat if he so desires, but if other departments of society go on strike his product will be of no value. Society is composed of many units, all closely interwoven and all of equal importance one to the other. If the farmer had to teach his own children, produce his own coal, drive his own trains, and do a few other things like that, he would no longer have time to produce wheat. Above all, he would not have a market, which is now readily available to him. I deny that those who actually produce our material are deserving of any special consideration. Society is built up of many functions, all amalgamating and working in harmony. All are deserving

of equal consideration. I subscribe more or less to the argument that the metropolitan area will secure fairly good representation even if the present number of members is not added to. Those who represent the country live in and about the city and are usually broad-minded enough to advocate the requirements of the city, even though the direct representatives of the metropolitan area refrain from doing so. That part of the State, therefore, receives fair representation. The most objectionable feature of the Bill is that the Government have endeavoured to force electors, living 300 or 400 miles from the seat of government, to accept smaller representation in this Chamber; less than electorates such as the Swan and Northam. No member, including the Premier, can justify that. It is the most absurd part of the Bill and leads to many anomalies. The minority of the people have as much voice in this Parliament as a great number more than the minority. Rewards are given to some electorates and denied to others. I would have appreciated a Bill of this kind had it been formulated so that all and sundry in this State were considered, that distance from the seat of government was reckoned with as well as community of interests, and preference not given to any particular electorate in the State. There are many anomalies existing to-day. There are members representing a small number of electors who believe that a redistribution of seats is necessary. The Government have dismally failed to do justice to all and sundry under this measure. The anomalies which have existed in the past may continue in the future. The member for Roebourne was elected on 246 votes. He is entitled to all the privileges of a member such as the member for Canning, who was elected to represent 10,000 voters.

Mr. Teesdale: And to all the insults attached to the office.

Mr. Johnston: We get them, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: He gets a gold pass and has all the other privileges as well.

Mr. Teesdale: It cannot be used on a steamer.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member gets concessions there. Compare this with the Perth seat. Percy Brunton got 293 votes, 47 more than the member for Roebourne lost his deposit, and was put in gaol.

Mr. Hughes: Percy had a bigger following than the member for Roebourne.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but he was put in gaol all the same. The first inspiration of the Government in connection with this Bill was to provide a more equitable representation in this House. In the construction of the Bill they utterly failed. They have left it open for the same anomalies to occur as have occurred in the past.

The Premier: Why not talk about it in Committee?

Mr. Mann: Are you willing to let the Bill go into Committee?

Mr. MARSHALL: It matters not what I am willing to do. I have only one vote here. The matters leading up to the introduction

of this Bill were touched upon only briefly by the Premier. He said it was probably due more to a decline in the mining industry than the population on the goldfields had decreased. I do not dispute that. The population has decreased. I am pleased to see that many of the people have settled in the agricultural areas. This is a more profitable and healthier avocation for mining people, and they were wise to take it on. They ought to have more opportunity of making good there. Had they remained in the mining industry they would have gone either to the Wooroloo Sanatorium or to the Karrakatta cemetery. I am with the member for Mt. Magnet in the reasons which he gives as to why the mining industry has gone down. It cannot be argued that the sheep raising industry, the meat industry, the goldmining industry and all the other branches of mining have not been persecuted more or less by State and Federal legislation.

The Premier: Not in this State.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting wide of the subject.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want to show why it was essential to introduce this Bill. It would not have been necessary to do so if the mining industry had flourished to-day as it did years ago. This decline in the industry is due to persecution, to high railway freights, etc.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Bill does not affect that position.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Bill would not be here but for that fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: We can only deal with it as it is here.

Mr. MARSHALL: I want to show why the Bill has been brought down.

The Premier: It is here because it is here.

Mr. MARSHALL: Now that the Bill is here the mining industry is deserving of better consideration than it is now receiving. My electorate has been conscripted into the North-West. It was compelled to come under the jurisdiction of the North-West Commissioner. While the Government have a keen desire to shift the Murchison electorate into the North-West for purposes of administration, they have religiously refrained from including it in the North-West under this Bill. I am a disowned child. I am a wanderer.

Mr. Richardson: We shall have to adopt you.

Mr. MARSHALL: I suppose I represent the floating seat. It is my intention in Committee to find out why I have been deserted, and why the Murchison electorate has been dealt with in this way. I want to be adopted by the North-West. I desire conscription and to stay in the North-West.

Mr. Lambert: You want separation and alimony.

Mr. MARSHALL: No.

Capt. Carter: We will keep the children.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Gascoyne represents a more favoured electorate than I do. He is included in the North-

West. He has a steamship service to his centre and an aerial service, and to use a common phrase he is within kicking distance of his centre in that he can get there from Geraldton by motor car in 24 hours. He enjoys better climatic conditions than part of the Murchison and has more favourable surroundings in every way. His electorate borders on the coast and yet it is included in the North-West.

Mr. Wilson: He is not complaining.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not say he is. He is more Scotch than the member for Collie. He is too mean to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: Although the Gascoyne electorate has greater advantages compared with the Murchison electorate, yet the Gascoyne is in the North-West. The Murchison electorate has a greater right to be included in that part of the State than the Gascoyne.

Mr. Angelo: You belong to the North-West.

Mr. MARSHALL: Exactly. We have the same right to be included in that division of the State as the Gascoyne electorate. The Bill does not treat all electorates justly, particularly those that are represented by Opposition members.

The Premier: You cannot say that.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Premier must admit that the Bill does not do justice to Labour electorates. I am compelled to represent 1,800 electors in the Murchison constituency, and all we have in the way of means of communication is one railway.

Mr. Angelo: You can take our aeroplane and we will have your railway service.

Mr. Troy: But you have a steamship service as well.

Mr. Angelo: What good is it to us?

Mr. MARSHALL: The Premier says that no political influence governed the framing of the Bill.

The Premier: I say that absolutely.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am pleased to have that assurance from the Premier, but the inference to be drawn from the measure is that political influence has governed the framing of the measure. I ask the Premier to tell the House why the Murchison electorate is compelled to have a quota of 1,800, while the member for Gascoyne represents a constituency whose quota is—

The Premier: Two thousand.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. There are 1,500 names on the roll in my electorate, and we will be between 400 and 500 names short. There are over 2,000 people eligible for enrolment, but we have not the facilities to enrol them.

The Premier: Your quota is 1,500, and so is that of the Gascoyne electorate.

Mr. Angelo: As a matter of fact, I have 50 more than the member for Murchison.

Mr. MARSHALL: We have not the facilities that the people in the Gascoyne have. I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Angelo: You can support the second reading and alter the Bill in Committee.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I will leave that to the Government. As to enrolments, does the Premier intend to have a strict canvass made with a view to enrolling all electors?

Mr. Hughes: And removing the "dead names."

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter for discussion under the Electoral Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is a matter of vital importance in connection with the Bill, because there is discrimination as between electorates and their boundaries. The quotas provided in the Bill will really define the boundaries of the electorates, and there are hundreds of electors who are not on the roll and the absence of their names will mean that hon. members will have to represent so much larger areas.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will not be the fault of the Bill, but of the Electoral Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be so, but the enrolments will really decide the boundaries of the electorates under the Bill.

Mr. Hughes: There should be a proper canvass.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, a house to house canvass.

Mr. MARSHALL: If I had a little time, I could put more than my quota on the roll for the Murchison electorate, but as it is, these names will not appear on the roll and I will be forced to represent a greater area and a greater number of electors. I protest against the Bill being introduced by the Government without every eligible person being placed upon the roll first. It is all right for the metropolitan people, because there are facilities right at hand to get persons enrolled.

Mr. Hughes: The rolls in the metropolitan area are not correct.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not say they are, but still the facilities are here to have the names enrolled and, in any case, those facilities are more readily available in the metropolitan area than in outback centres where people may reside 100 miles or more from the police station. I protest against the Bill getting a free passage through the House, until there has been a proper canvass.

Mr. Davies: Will you support one vote one value?

Mr. MARSHALL: Had the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) remained in his seat, he would have heard what I said on that point. I cannot subscribe wholly to that principle. I cannot see how it is possible for anyone to say that under the conditions existing in Western Australia the application of such a principle would be equitable.

Mr. Hughes: You do not subscribe to one vote six values?

Mr. MARSHALL: I would be more generous than that. The present Government have little desire to see much go to the metropolitan area. Their main backing is from the Country Party benches, and they are mostly concerned with their interests. I realise the necessity for such a Bill and

recognise that it is long overdue. The Government, however, having introduced the Bill, should have given due recognition to the people in the outback districts. That is the strongest objection I have to the Bill. Apart from that, no one can logically protest against the introduction of a Bill of this description because it is essential. No one can say that it is equitable, however, to force members in the central goldfields areas to represent 3,416 electors, whilst the member for Swan, whose electorate is so close to the city, is asked to represent only 2,846. When such a proposal is advanced under a Bill it is time to protest. Had it not been for the discovery of the goldfields it is probable that the only inhabitants of Western Australia would still be the famous six families of "groopers" and their descendants.

Mr. Cowan: But even then, they would not be the only inhabitants!

Mr. MARSHALL: Hon. members sitting on the cross benches have been selfish in a way, in endorsing the attitude of the Government regarding the quotas for the respective areas, particularly as some of the agricultural areas are so close to the metropolitan area, and possess such facilities for transit and communication. The country districts are strongly represented in the Cabinet.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Do not forget that the metropolitan area has no representative in the Cabinet.

Mr. MARSHALL: The goldfields areas are in the same boat, for they have no direct representative. The Minister for Mines has had some experience in connection with the goldfields, and his experience has been of great value to the Government, and of no small importance in the management of the mining industry. That does not apply, however, to the interests represented by members sitting on the cross benches. The Bill will place them in a better position than members representing goldfields areas. In Committee I will compel the Government, if I can, to adhere to past procedure and force them to permit us in the North-West to remain in solitude and contentment.

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

Mr. HERON (Mt. Leonora) [7.30]: I oppose the Bill in its present form, but I am not opposed to a redistribution on a fair basis. No one would oppose a Bill if it offered fair representation to all sections of the people. This Bill would not have been brought down had the population outback remained at approximately what it was some years ago. We have been told that the Bill has been rendered necessary on account of the decline of population in the mining districts. If this is so, we have to consider the reasons why the people have left the mining areas. This takes us back a number of years even prior to the war. Mining had undoubtedly declined from what it was in the early days. At the outbreak of war a great number of men from the goldfields

enlisted for service overseas. These men had followed mining and prospecting. The prospector is the man who makes it possible for the mining industry to thrive. If there are no prospectors out, there is no opportunity to open up new mines. A number of prospectors enlisted, and the cost of living increased through the effects of the war. Many funds were started, and the demands made upon the cash of our people in the mining areas prevented them from sending prospectors out. It is well known that the great bulk of prospectors go from the mines, being assisted by their mates who remain in the mines and defray the expenses. The cost of living, coupled with the increased railway freights and the higher prices for mining requisites, killed prospecting. In addition to the absence of prospecting the established mines were getting deeper and the grade of ore was becoming poorer and, with the heavier cost of commodities due largely to the increased railway freights, work became scarce and population left the fields. But this is only a temporary condition. In 1919 the State battery at Leonora crushed only 94 tons of ore. This quantity has increased annually until last year the quantity crushed was 1,000 tons for a return of 1,400 ounces over the plates, and another 350 ounces should be accounted for in the sands and slimes. If costs could be reduced still further, these centres would undoubtedly thrive. There is not the population in the back country to-day which was there some years ago. You, Mr. Speaker, know that there was a big drift of people from your electorate, and these people are now scattered all over Western Australia. The closing of the Lanecfield mine at the end of 1920 threw out of work 150 to 200 miners who drifted away, while the hands employed in the stores and all who went to make up the mining community had to look for work elsewhere. Only a few months ago the railways were carting ore as back loading from the Eulamina copper mine to the super works for 12s. 10d. per ton. The freight was raised to 14s. 10d. and then to 22s. 10d., a price at which the company could not make it pay. To-day that mine is closed down, and the responsibility for it lies at the door of the Government. Where previously there were 20 to 40 men employed, no one is there to-day. In my own district of Leonora there has been a decrease in the number of electors from 1,050 in 1920 to 800. This is due to the fire at the Sons of Gwalia mine. The Sons of Gwalia mine, however, is erecting a new 25 head of stamps, and within the next two or three months at least 300 to 400 more people will be residing in this electorate, making a total of about 1,100. If the Bill were fair, no one would object to it, but let us consider the figures. The 13 goldfields seats have a combined total of 23,023 electors. If the 13 seats were still retained, there would be a quota of 1,771 for each district, that is, taking the whole of the goldfields together instead of cutting them into two areas. The Premier in moving the second reading said

it was necessary to cut the mining area in two. I would like to know the reason why. For our 13 seats, we would have 1,300 more electors than there are for the northern seats. Some of the mining seats are nearer to Perth and easier of access than are the northern seats, but there are some which are not too easy of access. The Minister for Works mentioned that that railway ran practically through the centre of his electorate and that he had to travel 25 miles on each side of the railway to reach the outskirts of his electorate.

The Minister for Works: I said some places are 24 to 25 miles from the railway.

Mr. HERON: The Minister is very lucky. The railway traverses my district for a distance of only eight or nine miles.

The Premier: You are lucky, too. It does not go to Roebourne at all.

Mr. HERON: But there is a shipping service to Roebourne. I do not say that the Roebourne electorate should be required to have as large a quota as other districts. The point is the railway just touches the fringe of my electorate. Wherever I want to go, I have to travel by motor or sulky. If I wish to go north to the boundary of the district it is 90 miles from Leonora. Out west to Mount Ida is another 65 miles, and there is no train in that direction. The Minister for Works is lucky if he has to travel only 25 miles from the train.

The Minister for Works: All I wanted to show was that it was not the feather-bed constituency some members seem to think.

Mr. HERON: I have been in the Murchison electorate, and the nearest point of the Wiluna district is 120 to 130 miles from the rail head. The member for that district has to travel by motor in order to get through his electorate. If it is fair to stipulate that electorates in the north shall require a quota of only 1,000, it is just as fair that the remote districts in a mining area be put on a somewhat similar mark. I do not advocate that the mining districts should be put on exactly the same footing, but there should not be such a big disparity as is proposed. The goldfields will require a quota almost double what will be required for the districts of the north, and that is not fair. Had the 13 seats on the goldfields been combined and the quota calculated, there would have been 1,771 electors in each district. The Premier said it was necessary to cut out four seats on the goldfields. If he cut out two seats and refrained from dividing the mining area into two sections, we would have a quota of 2,099 electors for each district, which is double that required in the north. To travel to my electorate means being absent from Perth for a whole week. It takes from Wednesday in one week to Wednesday in the next week on account of the train service, and during the session that means an absence of a whole week from my Parliamentary duties. This shows the unfairness of the Bill as drafted. In the last two or three years mining in my district has been on the up-grade.

But for the disastrous fire at the Sons of Gwalia mine, there would not have been such a decline in population. The district, however, looks better to-day than it has done for the last 10 or 12 years. Where we did not have one battery working, we have now three working. At Mt. Ida the battery was crushing only about once in every 18 months, but a State battery and a private battery are now working there. Apart from mining, some of the best pastoral country in the State is to be found in the district. I have only to refer the House to a newspaper cutting which shows the number of stock carried by the Railway Department in that part of the State during the past 12 months. The equivalent in freight collected by the Railway Department was £4,230, and that amount does not include freight collected on stock sent from the coast to the goldfields. These figures prove that the pastoral industry, as well as the mining industry, is on the up grade. That being the case we may expect in the near future to have a bigger population there than has been the case in recent years. There are at the present time about 13 parties out prospecting in and around Leonora. That number does not include the parties who are out around Lawlers, Mt. Ida, and Malcolm districts. Recent returns have given as much as 32 and 33 cwt. per ton, showing that the district has still a good chance of again becoming a gold producer. I draw attention to the lack of interest which has been displayed in connection with this Bill. Yesterday afternoon an effort was made to secure the adjournment of the debate on the second reading. That was defeated by 25 votes to 16. Two minutes after the division was taken there were nine members on the Ministerial side of the Chamber. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) compared his electorate with those on the goldfields. The comparison, however was not fair. As I have already explained, I must lose a week if I desire to go to my constituency, whereas the hon. member may leave Perth on Thursday, arrive at his constituency late that night, leave again on Tuesday morning and reach the city in time for the Tuesday sitting of Parliament. Last night the figures of the Leonora-Mt. Margaret and Menzies electorates were quoted. At Leonora the numbers were given as 784, but within the next two months I assure the House there will be 1,100 on the roll. In the mining district a member does not really represent everyone who is in his electorate. Unfortunately from the Redistribution of Seats Bill point of view the laws of the Commonwealth and of the State permit those who are not naturalised British subjects to work in our mines. Those people are not entitled to enrolment and I can say without fear of contradiction that at mines like the Lancefield, the Sons of Gwalia, and the Eulaminna at least 60 per cent. of those who work underground are foreigners, who are not entitled to become naturalised. To that we may add

another 30 per cent. representing the wives, and although some of these are Australian-born, they are denied the franchise by reason of the fact that they are married to foreign people. The matter that has puzzled me somewhat since the Premier introduced the Bill is why scattered goldfields areas are required to have a bigger quota than agricultural areas.

The Premier: The quota in my electorate is the same as that for Kalgoorlie.

Mr. HERON: The Premier's remarks on the second reading did not put the position that way. I do not agree that Kalgoorlie should have a bigger quota than an agricultural area. In fact it should be the other way. The agricultural areas are nearer to the seat of Government, and those who live in those areas are engaged in a better occupation and under better conditions than the people who are less fortunate by having to be out in the far back country. I trust that the Bill, if it reaches the Committee stage will be altered on the lines I have suggested. The Government do not offer inducements for people to go out back, and when they go out back, to remain there. The increases in railway fares and freights have had the effect of forcing the people to leave the goldfields. The cost of water, too, was increased a little while back from 2s. to 3s. In that case, however, the Minister for Works was good enough to agree to a reduction to 2s. 6d. The mining outlook is particularly bright and I am pleased to say that those who had the pluck to remain at Gwalia waiting for the Sons of Gwalia to be restarted will be rewarded in the near future. We admit that there has been a general decline in mining, but we know the cause of it. The prospects, however, are such that those distant electorates will in all likelihood look up again very shortly. Before the Commission to be appointed under the Bill commences its work, a house to house canvass should be carried out so that the names of those who are entitled to be on the roll will be placed there. In connection with the recent Kalgoorlie election we found that between 300 and 400 people who were entitled to enrolment were disfranchised. Even with the enrolment of all who can claim to have their names on the roll we shall not get a fair idea of the adult population in the goldfield centres for the reasons which I have stated. I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but if it be carried, and it reaches the Committee stage I shall assist to effect amendments in the direction I have stated.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell --Northam--in reply) [7.55]: I have listened attentively to the debate on this question, and I must confess I have heard very little argument against the Bill.

Mr. McCallum: You have been outside most of the time.

Mr. Lutey: Or asleep.

The PREMIER: I have been too wide awake for hon. members opposite. Everyone



who has spoken requires something different. My friend who has just sat down wants the goldfields to be divided into 13 electorates. Others want 15 seats for the metropolitan area. Again others object to the North-West proposals. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the hon. member for Roebourne was elected by 240 people. If that was the case, all I can say is that those 240 people made a very wise choice, and I do not know that the member for Roebourne could be a better representative had he been elected by 12,000 people. Everyone except the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has agreed that we cannot have equal electorates.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member got very close to it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said they should be more even than the Bill provides.

The PREMIER: One vote one value, I think the hon. member said. Everyone agrees that there must be a smaller quota for the electorates outside the metropolitan area.

Mr. Willcock: All agree that it is a very unsatisfactory Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes, and no one has said a word against it. Hon. members have spoken just as they would to their electors, by holding up the Bill in the air and saying, "What do you think of this?" Of course I know what happens. It has always been so with a Bill of this kind. I am really pleased with the reception that has been given to the Bill.

Mr. Corboy: You are easily pleased.

The PREMIER: It is not my fault that the people have transferred themselves from one part of the State to another. I am perfectly satisfied with the Bill as it stands.

Mr. McCallum: Of course you are. You are trying to insure your political life.

The PREMIER: The Bill was brought down only because we deem it our duty to give the people of this country fair representation.

Mr. Marshall: How do you justify the quota in the central goldfields area as compared with Swan?

The PREMIER: Some members have urged that there should be proportional representation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why not? It does not suit you.

The PREMIER: It would suit me very well.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Give it a trial.

The PREMIER: I should like to hear some arguments in favour of it before it is tried here. If the hon. member wants proportional representation to be the system here, he had better educate the people up to it. Let him take the next week or two off and stump the country in favour of proportional representation. Of course the Bill will be through before then.

Mr. Corboy: The people are prepared to proportional representation now.

The PREMIER: All we want to do by this Bill is to obtain fair representation, under the system which has obtained in this State. That system we propose to continue. We cannot claim for it that it is scientifically correct, but we can claim that it gives fair representation to the people.

Mr. McCallum: To one section of the people.

The PREMIER: Some members represent very large areas of country. The representation under the system which obtains is more or less rough and ready. That always has been so, and I venture to say that no other system is possible. No one speaking during this discussion has said otherwise; everyone has said that the present system must continue.

Mr. Corboy: That remark shows how frequently you have been absent from the Chamber during the discussion.

The PREMIER: I have listened to the whole of the discussion. I heard a very interesting and perfectly moderate speech from the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy). I listened also to a thoroughly moderate speech from the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), who wishes to be included in the North-West.

Mr. Marshall: Let me hear you justify the quotas.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murchison must keep order.

The PREMIER: The member for Murchison dwelt on the fact that there are only four seats for the North-West. At the same time, he asked to be included with the four.

Mr. Marshall: You conscript me under one Bill, but you keep me out of this.

The PREMIER: The discussion has been most interesting to me, because all members have approved of the Bill as being necessary. They have also expressed their approval of the principle of the Bill.

Mr. McCallum: What is the use of talking that kind of stuff? I say the Bill is a travesty.

The PREMIER: The member for South Fremantle says that the quota should be greater for the agricultural area.

Mr. McCallum: The Bill attacks the principle of representative government, and then you say members approve of it. No fair-minded Parliament would ever pass the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: No fair-minded Parliament would do other than accept the principle of representation under this Bill. After all, members have got away from the main point, which is the quota. The quota is everything. It does not matter at all that the State will be divided into four or five divisions. The quota is the question. For Perth, as hon. members know, the quota will be twice that for the agricultural area and the central mining area. The agricultural and central mining areas will have the same quota. Specially favourable treatment is given to the scattered mining districts. The number of voters on the roll is increased in that case so that the quota may be smaller. As against

the quota of 4,000 for scattered agricultural districts, there will be a quota of 1,800 for scattered mining districts. As regards the representation for the North-West, let me point out that the North-West is a huge territory, a vast portion of this State, unserved by railways, difficult to travel through, and situated at an enormous distance from the seat of government. The North-West is very differently circumstanced from Yilgarn, for instance. The Yilgarn electorate is served by railways at one end and by steamers at the other. By boat one can get to any part of that electorate by travelling less than 200 miles. The member for the Roebourne electorate has to travel hundreds of miles by road.

Mr. Teesdale: Camels and a buggy. No motor cars or trains there.

The PREMIER: I do hope that hon. members, when they come to consider the Bill in Committee, will realise that it is not a question of the electorate of Northam, which, of course, is a very important electorate, or a question of the electorate of Forrest or Yilgarn or Hannans or any other electorate. We have to determine what the quota shall be. This Bill fixes what I think the quota ought to be. However, that is the one provision which will concern hon. members. It has not yet been discussed at any great length, but is the most important question. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) was in the Government which introduced a Redistribution of Seats Bill in 1913. The present Bill provides that the quota for the agricultural area shall be just one half the quota for Perth. My friend's Bill said that there might be a variation of 40 per cent.; in other words that 100 electors in Perth might be equal to 60 electors in my district or another agricultural district. We say that 100 voters in Perth shall be equal to 50 voters in an agricultural district. So that really there is not much difference.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The 1913 Bill provided for 15 members in the metropolitan area.

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes; and since then the metropolitan area has an additional 32,000 electors.

The PREMIER: If the Bill of 1913 were in operation, it would be the method by which we would fix the representation for the State to-day. It would mean that Perth would have 23 members. Similarly, the goldfields would have six, instead of nine as proposed by this Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The 1913 Bill gave the metropolitan area 15 members, and since then the number of electors in that area has been increased by 32,000.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: What is the use of discussing the position in 1913? What the House has to do now is to provide for the people a fair means of electing their members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I agree with you, but you brought the other matter up by interjection.

The PREMIER: I am endeavouring to point out to the House that the 1913 Bill meant that there might be 60 electors in Northam balanced by 100 electors in Perth. The present Bill says there must be 50 electors in the agricultural area as against 100 in Perth. The difference is only one in 10.

Mr. Hughes: Ten per cent.

The PREMIER: Yes. This Bill provides that within the areas set out in it there may be a variation of 20 per cent. either way. That, of course, does not operate all over the State, but only within the divisions created by the Bill. The difference, therefore, will be as I have stated, and not as hon. members opposite would have the House believe. We must now face the responsibility of dealing with the question of the representation of the people. I know that to bring down such a measure as this is to provide a great opportunity when the elections come round. After the redistribution of seats in 1911 the only thing to which candidates addressed themselves when before the electors was redistribution of seats.

Mr. McCallum: The same thing will occur again.

The PREMIER: Yes, I suppose this Bill will be used in the same way. I want to do a fair thing by the people of this country. I do not know that we here are of such value to the people as some members have said. In the course of the debate it has been stated that if Kalgoorlie were given another representative it would be very much better for the mining industry and for the men engaged in it. It do not know whether it would or not. I am satisfied with the goldfields representative we have now. I do, however, wish hon. members to realise that under this measure the mining industry will be fairly treated. It cannot be contended that all votes should have an equal value. At the same time, there is no intention that the goldfields shall suffer by under-representation. I repeat, it is unfortunate that many goldfields voters have transferred themselves to some other part of the State, and especially that some of them have gone East. However, we must face the position as we find it. It may easily be that the central goldfields will get five representatives.

Mr. Willcock: Then you have altered your opinion.

The PREMIER: No. If Kalgoorlie has the electors, she will get the representation. If the metropolitan area be found to have 90,000 electors, as some members suggest, then the metropolitan area will get representation accordingly. After all, how is it possible for me, without having the definite figures, to say whether Kalgoorlie will have four representatives or five, or whether the agricultural areas will be given 22 seats or 23? A great deal has been said about undue representation of the agricultural interests; but not all the seats included in "agriculture" are purely agricultural seats. We have in that area the Forrest electorate, so ably represented by our friend opposite, the

Collic electorate, three sea-port towns, and Northam, Narrogin and other big inland centres. Not by any means are they all agricultural seats. I suppose there are not more than 16 agricultural seats within the strict meaning of the term.

Mr. Johnston: It is a misnomer to classify them all as agricultural seats.

The PREMIER: It is. Again, it does not follow that because there are, say, 22 seats in the agricultural areas, the whole of those seats will go to members on this side of the House. Some of them never have been represented by members on this side; nor can it be pretended that 14 or 15 metropolitan seats will all go to members on one side of the House. So, too, in respect of the goldfields representatives, it is not to be expected that they will all be ranged on one side. It would be very bad if any great interests were represented by members sitting exclusively together. All the electorates contain people of many shades of political opinion. However, I have no wish to detain the House any longer.

Mr. Willecock: What about putting the rolls in order?

The PREMIER: They will have to be put in order. I do not know whether the public realise that we have compulsory enrolment, that if they fail to get on the rolls they can be prosecuted as they are under the Federal Act. I hope they will see to it that they do get on the rolls. Of course, if they change their residence frequently, I suppose it is a little annoying to have to go along and get on the new roll. Some people are very careless about it.

Mr. Lambert: Why not prosecute them?

The PREMIER: Probably I should have to start with the hon. member. At any rate, considerable interest has been manifested in the Bill. Hon. members appear to have studied it carefully. In Committee we shall have to discuss it in detail. I wish the people would realise that we are very much concerned about giving them proper representation. We have no desire to make the position better for members on this side. It has been said that the Bill was put up to keep the Government in power. Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Willecock: It will have that effect.

Mr. McCallum: It was framed with that idea.

The PREMIER: If I wished to do better than we have done during the past four years, I should be very greedy indeed. We have had a substantial majority under the existing Act. I know, of course, that use will be made of the Bill when the elections come round.

Mr. McCallum: People will be told the truth.

The PREMIER: We will try to meet the statements made. I believe the people realise that we have introduced the Bill merely with a view to doing what is right. Redistribution of seats never has been accepted in the proper spirit, and never will be.

Mr. Willecock: We will give you the benefit of the doubt and say it is unconscious bias.

The PREMIER: It is not bias at all. I know what the hon. member will say at his election. However, I have no wish to say anything more at this stage.

Mr. McCallum: Are you not going to explain why you made the difference on the goldfields, the two divisions?

The PREMIER: I have already told the House that we made the two divisions to give the scattered goldfields population fair representation.

Mr. Chesson: And take it out of the central goldfields.

The PREMIER: The central goldfields, when they had 6,000 more voters, had the same representation as they have to-day. Although they have lost so many voters, it is not proposed under the Bill to reduce their representation. As a matter of fact it may be increased, if they have the votes to satisfy the quota. There is no suggestion to reduce the representation of the central goldfields, a closely populated, compact area. Does the hon. member object to the outer goldfields getting the proposed representation? Does he object to their being increased 50 per cent.?

Mr. McCallum: He objects to their being cut down as you are cutting them.

The PREMIER: We are not cutting them down. Only the want of electors can cut them down. If they have electors to satisfy their moderate quota, the outer goldfields will get the representation. We do not apply the same quota to them as we apply to the agricultural districts. The Bill of 1913 proposed less representation for them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: On the population of 1913 the Bill of 1913 would give them 13 seats to-day.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort. Under the rolls of to-day the outer goldfields—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Oh hang to-day! I am dealing with 1913.

The PREMIER: The Bill of 1913 was intended to regulate the division of seats for all time. Under that Bill the goldfields would have had six seats instead of nine. However, it is of no use pursuing the argument, for we shall have it all over again in Committee.

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

Ayes	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	18

Majority for .. .. 4

#### AYES.

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

(Teller.)

## NOMS.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Chesson  
Mr. Clydesdale  
Mr. Corboy  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. Heron  
Mr. Hughes  
Mr. Lambert  
Mr. Lutey

Mr. Marshall  
Mr. McCallum  
Mr. Munale  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. J. M. Smith  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. O'Loghlin

(Teller.)

## PAIRS:

For.	Against.
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Collier
Mr. J. Thomson	Mr. Walker

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT (No. 2).

Out of Order.

Message from the Council received and read transmitting the Bill and requesting the Assembly's concurrence.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have read the Bill and found that in Subclause 3 of Clause 2 it appropriates money. That is a definite violation of the Constitution Act, 1921, which was passed by this Parliament. The portion of the Act to which I refer was taken from the Federal Constitution Act. The section I am relying upon is taken word for word from the Federal Act with the exception of some words which have been put in, after a conference I had with the Solicitor General. I will read both sections of the House. The Federal Constitution Act, called the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, page 127, Section 53, reads as follows:—

Proposed laws appropriating revenue or moneys or imposing taxation shall not originate in the Senate. But a proposed law shall not be taken to appropriate revenue or moneys or to impose taxation by reason only of its containing provisions for the imposition or appropriation of fines or other pecuniary penalties or for the demand or payment or appropriation of fees for licences, or fees for services under the proposed law.

When the Constitution Act was before this Chamber in 1921 I was not satisfied that it was sufficiently clear to prevent the Council from introducing appropriation Bills. I, therefore, interviewed the Solicitor General and discussed the matter with him at some length. He was perfectly satisfied that we were sufficiently safeguarded and he said "To make it abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker, we will put in these words." He then put in words which I will read in the section as a whole. The section is as follows:—

Bills appropriating revenue or moneys or imposing taxation shall not originate in the Legislative Council, but a Bill shall not be taken to appropriate revenue or moneys or

to impose taxation by reason only of its containing provisions for the imposition or appropriation of fines or for pecuniary penalties, or for the demand of payment or appropriation of fees for licenses or fees for registration or other services under the Bill.

The words that have been put in were "or fees for registration." This made it abundantly clear that all those fees that were not considered to be appropriating revenue followed one after the other and they all meant the same. Those were for services rendered by the Government to the citizen. The Legislative Council have full power to deal with an Act of that description. But this is for services rendered to the Government. Subclause 3 of the Bill is perfectly clear. It says—

Each member of the board shall hold office for such period as the Governor may think fit and receive such fees as may be prescribed.

These fees would have to be appropriated by Parliament. That being so, there is nothing left for me but to rule the Bill out of order. The Bill is accordingly ruled out of order.

## BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [8.37] in moving the second reading, said: I do not know what the difference is between a road and a street in one sense. A road within the boundaries of a road board district may be closed by an Order-in-Council, but before a street within a municipality can be closed an Act of Parliament must be passed to permit of this being done. I do not propose to differentiate between roads and streets, because I may arouse the wrath of some municipal authority and bring down upon my head further blame. Last session the Roads Closure Bill was dropped, and there has therefore been an accumulation of certain street closures for the last two years. These are all embodied in the Bill. The sanction of the various municipal councils has been obtained for these closures and no objections have been raised to the Bill. The first closure is a portion of Hare-street, in the Albany municipality. The owner of Albany lot A22, coloured green on litho and sketch 1, constructed a metalled road to provide access to his residence from Rowley-road and planted ornamental trees in the positions shown. He applied for the closure of the portion of Hare-street so that he could purchase the land comprised therein together with lot 414, to enable him to control the storm water and prevent damage to the road. The Albany council have raised no objection to the closure. Since making the application the owner has sold his property, but the present owner desires that the matter be proceeded with. If the closure is agreed to, it is proposed to add the closed portion to Lot 41 and make it available for sale as one lot. The second closure is portion of Wiese-street, i

the municipality of Narrogin. That portion of Wiese-street coloured blue on litho 2 has been included in the Narrogin water supply catchment area and the Water Supply Department has applied for its closure. The Narrogin council has no objection and the district surveyor considers the road is not required. Another road closure applied for is in the Wagin municipality. It is portion of Trench-street. The municipal council have applied for the closure of that portion of Trench-street shown in blue on litho 3 in order that it may be added to the show ground, and thus enable certain improvements to be carried out, there being insufficient room at present to allow of such improvements being effected. The council have agreed to indemnify the Government against any reasonable claim for compensation in the event of any such claim being established, but, with two exceptions, the owners of the lots abutting on this portion of the street have agreed, in writing, to the closure. The fourth closure is in regard to portion of Cornwall and Charles-streets in Bunbury. The local authority has applied for the closure of portions of Charles-street and Cornwall-street in the subdivision of Leschenault location 26, as shown in blue of tracing and litho 4. This is portion of a private subdivisional street and ends in a cul-de-sac. The owners of the land coloured green on litho, the Westralian Farmers Ltd., have agreed to transfer to the council in consideration of this closure, the small portion coloured brown on the tracing as an addition to Charles-street. This closure will enable the holders of the fee of the land contained therein to dispose of it. The council states it can never be used as a street. The last closure applied for is also in connection with the municipality of Bunbury. The Wellington Agricultural and Pastoral Society has acquired land which includes part of Mary-street and Clarke-street, for the purpose of an extension of the show ground and also for a deviation of Clarke-street. I have a tracing which shows Clarke-street as it stands at present, and of which part is to be closed under the provisions of the Road Districts Act 1919. The Society has agreed to transfer to the Bunbury Council the land for the purpose of a deviation of Clarke-street. The Society desires to include a small portion of Mary-street which is also shown on the plan, and this will be attached to the show ground too. This portion of Mary-street will be useless as a street when the deviation is made. Being within the municipality, however, it is necessary to close it by Act of Parliament. The Bunbury Municipal Council has agreed to these proposals. The necessity for making such applications for the closure of roads is due to the progress of the centres affected. The land set aside for recreation and for show purposes has become too small, and it has been found necessary to secure an additional area. Where it is possible to give the people a little more land, and where the rights of individual residents

are not interfered with, it has become customary to ask Parliament to sanction the proposed closures of roads affected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. Johnston: I move that the debate be adjourned.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Why not let the Bill go through?

Mr. Johnston: I want to know what it means.

Mr. SPEAKER: As there is no seconder, the motion lapses.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.48]: In connection with the road closure proposed at Wagin, the Minister mentioned that the municipality desires to have a portion of the street closed, due to the fact that the local agricultural show ground has become too small. The closing of the road will not injure any ratepayer who owns property in the street. It is mentioned that the consent of all the residents of that street has been received with the exception of two. If those two residents submit any claim for compensation, the Wagin Council will indemnify the Government. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.49]: We know that local authorities at times approve of streets being closed in the interests of various institutions. According to the statement made by the Minister, the first closure is desired to allow an owner of private property to carry out certain drainage work. He said that the portion to be closed would be sold as part of the lot which the owner possesses. There is a possibility that the primary object is to increase the holding of the owner. However, if it does not affect anyone else, it is purely a matter of arrangement between the local authority and the person concerned. I do not know whether there is any objection on the part of the local residents. There appears to be no objection to the closure referred to in the second schedule, but the third one becomes a more serious matter. There are two objections and the consent of these two owners should be obtained, or their claims settled, before the schedule is passed. It is all very well to say that the local authority will guarantee to pay the compensation should any claim be made, but once we pass the Bill that guarantee is not worth the paper on which the Bill is printed. The Act by that time will have closed the road, and there is no guarantee that the authorities will pay the necessary compensation. So far as Wagin is concerned, I intend to move to strike out the references to that closure, because I think the whole matter should be settled before we pass the schedule. There is no objection regarding the closures at Bunbury. The principal reason why the closure of roads in a municipality has to be approved by Parliament is that there are so many in-

dividual persons who have the right-of-way over streets, and the closure of any road may affect considerably a person's interests not only abutting on the street but in the adjoining locality, because the closure of the road may prevent means of communication from one part of the town to another. In addition, the closure of a road may reduce the value of property. It is necessary, therefore, that such people should have an opportunity of placing their views before some authority. I have no objection to the Bill except in the case of the closure at Wagin. Arrangements should be made to reach finality with the two ratepayers concerned before we pass the Bill with the Wagin road closure included.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough—in reply) [8-52]:** As to the two owners I mentioned at Wagin, those individuals are non-residential property owners. They have known for some considerable time past that the municipal authorities intended asking for permission to close the road adjoining their properties. The closure is in order to increase the size of the show ground for public purposes. Despite the fact that these two non-residential property owners have received notices from the local governing authorities, they have not seen fit to reply to those notices.

**Mr. Harrison:** Are those ratepayers resident within the State?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I presume they are resident within the State, but their silence may be taken as giving consent, and that they have no objection to the closure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

**Mr. Angelo in the Chair; The Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.**

Clause 1—Agreed to.

Clause 2—Closure of portion of certain roads.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** There is a danger attached to the passing of the clause. If the Bill be agreed to, a person who owns land along any street to be closed has no right whatever to get compensation, unless it is paid voluntarily by the municipality. Every right of the landholder will be gone. I do not think it is a fair thing that a street should be closed unless the consent of all the property owners concerned has been received.

**Mr. O'Loughlen:** It is not a fair thing to do that.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** No, it is not just. These non-resident property owners may be living at a distance in the back country and may not know the position. They may not have received their notices from the local authorities. It is a dangerous precedent to set up.

**Mr. Teesdale:** Could we not place a compensation clause in the Bill?

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** I do not know how we could do it. We should protect people who are in this position because there is no provision for compensation once the Bill is passed.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The responsibility is thrown upon the council, who have agreed to indemnify the Government should any claim for compensation be paid.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** But there is no provision for that indemnity to be paid.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** That does not say that if people have been treated harshly and can substantiate their claim they will not be compensated.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** But you take away their legal right immediately the Bill is passed.

**Mr. Willcock:** Will they indemnify the individual?

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** The people with property abutting the street have a legal right to the use of the street as a thoroughfare, but once the Bill is passed, their right is gone. The principle is wrong. Every person should agree to the closing of such a street before the Bill is passed.

Progress reported.

## BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th November.

**Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [9-3]:** The Minister in moving the second reading of the Bill, said it was necessary to give the local governing bodies the power to insist upon the eradication of what might be deemed to be noxious weeds under this measure. The Bill defines noxious weed thus—

Any plant which by virtue of any notice issued and in force under Section 4 of this Act is a noxious weed in the place in which such plant is growing, and includes any fruit, seed, or part of any such weed.

No one will deny that the existence of any noxious weed is a danger to the development of the country. It may cause injury not only to stock but to plant life, and it may be the means of laying waste or putting out of cultivation some of the best land in the State. Because of this danger there is need to pay every attention to the eradication of noxious weeds, and to take the matter in hand without delay. Like the Minister, I live in the country where noxious weeds are very prevalent, and they are a very serious menace to the prosperous and successful development of that part of the country. The Minister referred to double-gees, a menace which has not yet affected the Eastern wheat belt, but against which the earliest precautions should be taken if it once makes an appearance in the wheat belt. In the Victoria district and some of the pastoral areas of the Gascoyne and Murchison, this is a great menace.

**Mr. Teesdale:** It is running all over the North.

**Hon. M. F. TROY:** I have seen fields out of cultivation for some years, and there has been no hope of placing stock on them because of the danger of the weeds. It is a most difficult weed to eradicate. Land may be cultivated for years, but the weed will reappear. The Bill provides that the local bodies as well as the Government shall have authority to appoint inspectors, and the board shall have power to give notice to a mortgagee, occupier, or owner of land, or the person in possession, to eradicate any weed

deemed to be a noxious weed under this measure. If the instruction is not carried out, the board have power to enter upon property and incur expense in eradicating the weed, charging the cost against the occupier.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It sounds very nice.

Hon. M. F. TROY: But it is very drastic, and the weakness is that the local board will not carry out the measure. Some of the greatest sinners are members of local boards. I was amused a few years ago at reading in an agricultural centre a warning that any person who had cattle trespassing on a particular commonage would be prosecuted. The notice was signed by the chairman of the local board, and 9 per cent. of the stock running on the commonage was owned by the chairman. Local boards are particularly venal in matters of this kind. They make regulations and appoint inspectors, but in my opinion they are the last authority to be entrusted with the superintendence of work of this character. The work requires proper supervision and prompt attention. The Bill provides for fines and penalties, but whereas it insists that the land holder shall be liable, the greatest sinners with regard to the propagation of noxious weeds—the Government—are to be exempt. This Bill apparently proclaims the doctrine that the King or the Crown can do no wrong. Whereas every occupier of land shall be deemed guilty of an offence if he does not eradicate noxious weeds, the Government are to be exempt. The Government hold large areas of Crown land which are the breeding places for vermin and noxious weeds. The Railway Department too have miles of country adjacent to railways which are the breeding places for noxious weeds, and result in the spread of these weeds from place to place. Yet the Government are to be exempt. That is the fatal objection to the Bill. It is utterly unreasonable, and it is neither just nor equitable to introduce a Bill, insisting that a person buying land from the Government shall under penalty be harassed in this way by inspectors, while the Government themselves take no action.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are doing our fair share regarding vermin destruction, although the local authorities have similar powers to those prescribed in this Bill.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Government have done and will do nothing with regard to the destruction of noxious weeds. I would like the Minister to state what are noxious weeds. There are many plants which once were regarded as noxious weeds, but are now recognised as useful fodder plants. The lupin is one. People used to pay to get it eradicated, but now it is used for fodder, and we are trying to propagate it. I would not mind paying £1 a bushel for seed. Many weeds may not be noxious weeds, but may have valuable feeding or other properties. The Government, however, have no botanist of repute to inquire into the nature of these weeds.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, one is engaged now.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Government had one man and sacked him. The Government fail signally in these matters which are of such great importance to the welfare of the country. If there is one thing urgent to the welfare of the country, it is the propagation of valuable fodders in order to increase the stock carrying capacity

of the land. I shall vote against the second reading for the simple reason that the greatest culprits in the propagation of noxious weeds are the Government. Until they come into line and undertake the eradication of noxious weeds on Crown lands, it is unreasonable to ask people who buy land from the Crown to incur the great expense of eradicating such weeds, when just outside their boundary fences nothing is done by the Government. I am surprised that a Minister representing an agricultural district should advocate additional burdens on the people he represents, and suggest that they be harassed and handicapped by fines and penalties, when alongside their property are Government lands for which no provision is made at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.15]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill because it is another attempt on the part of the Government to throw some of their responsibilities on to the shoulders of local governing bodies. The existing Act places all the responsibilities on the Government. The Bill shifts it from the Government to the local authorities. The local authorities of this State have sufficient to do to look after roads, drains, and other matters pertaining to local government, and the funds at their disposal are not sufficient to enable them to do other work, which, by legislation, they may be appointed to carry out. If the local bodies have to provide officers, and attend to the duties set out in the Bill, it will mean that other channels will have to be resorted to, to carry out the provisions of the Bill. I oppose the Bill also for the reason that the local authorities will not be able to enforce its provisions. I know of an instance regarding a sand drift which is a nuisance to the neighbourhood. The local authority called upon the owner of the property to keep the sand away, and the owner replied, "Do it yourself." The local authority was not able to do it because it did not have the means at its disposal. The result is that the existing position remains.

Mr. Harrison: That particular work might be costly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under the Bill there may be a number of areas to clear of noxious weeds and it may take a large sum of money to do it. Where are the local bodies to get the money from? What money they may have is required for other purposes. The Bill asks the local bodies to do something they cannot possibly carry out. It is provided that the Government may appoint an inspector. Whether that inspector can enforce an order on a person and compel the local authority to pay for it, I do not know. If I mistake not, the Government inspector will have full power, and that power may be given to him by regulation. He may order something to be done and charged to the local authorities. In this way, we would have the local authorities on the verge of bankruptcy all the time. Again, Crown lands are not brought within the scope of the Bill. It will be possible to leave them alone and permit the noxious weeds to grow there. Another clause in the Bill appears rather strange to me. While the local authority is forced to keep down noxious weeds, a clause in the Bill provides that a notice shall not be enforced if the local authority itself is in default. I know what the idea of the Minister is, but the duties it is proposed to impose on the

local bodies should be carried out by a Government department. Noxious weeds will not be cleared under a Bill of this description. It is the duty of the Department of Agriculture to see that the lands are kept as free as possible from noxious weeds.

The Premier: Why do you have a local authority at all?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Local authorities have not been brought into existence for this purpose.

The Minister for Agriculture: Every local authority wants the power to do this.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know that they will not be able to do the work. It is the duty of the Government to do it. The Government appear to be attempting as far as possible to get rid of everything they possibly can. So long as other people can raise money with which to carry on work, and so relieve the Government of responsibilities, the Government are satisfied. The Bill is wrong in principle and I intend to oppose the second reading.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [9.25]: I cannot understand the necessity for bringing in the Bill. There is already provision in the 1904 Act for what the Government wish to do and I am sure that there are sections in that Act which will meet the position with greater benefit to the State generally, than may be expected from the Bill. The greatest offenders in the way of spreading noxious weeds at the present time are the railway authorities. It is recognised in the Eastern States where noxious weeds have to be dealt with, that the Railway Department spread the seeds broadcast. An engine travelling at a high rate of speed carries the seeds and they germinate into plants that are of no use to mankind. I am rather surprised that the 1904 Act has not been brought into existence. The Bill appears to have been brought in to relieve the Government of responsibility. Section 14 of the 1904 Act which, in my opinion, gives the Government all the power they need, reads—

On a report being made to the Minister by any municipal council or road board or the advisory board of the Department of Agriculture that any noxious weed is growing upon any Government railway reserve, stock route, or camping ground, or unoccupied Crown lands within one mile of cultivated land, all such reserves, routes, grounds, or lands shall, from time to time, be cleared by the Minister for Lands and the Commissioner of Railways respectively.

If the Minister wishes to do a service to the State, he should certainly insert a clause in the Bill giving the Government power to carry out their responsibilities. The member for North-East Fremantle is right when he says that too much work is being placed on the shoulders of local governing bodies. As the Minister knows, the time of the members of those bodies is given up gratuitously for the benefit of the State, and it is unfair to heap on those people additional burdens. Look at the trouble we have to get rid of noxious animals. I refer to the dingo and the rabbit. The trouble to-day is, not that the local bodies do not want to carry out their duties, but to put the responsibility of cleaning up Crown lands on the shoulders of somebody. If the Minister cannot amend the 1904 Act, I hope he will provide the power that the local

bodies require, but so far as I can see there is already sufficient power in existence to effectively eradicate the noxious weeds in the State. The existing Act puts the responsibility of cleaning up Crown lands and railway reserves on the shoulders of those who should do the work, and I protest against giving the local bodies work to do which should be carried out by the department.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.27]: When I heard the Minister say that all local bodies desired the power which the Bill proposes to give them, I felt that he spoke without a knowledge of certain local authorities.

The Minister for Agriculture: I should say that the Busselton board would be too tired to do anything.

Mr. PICKERING: You can say what you like.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course I will exempt them at your request.

Mr. PICKERING: I should be glad if you would. One of the worst pests that we have is stinkwort, and I shall be glad if the Minister when replying will tell us how we are going to get rid of it. If he is prepared to assist in the eradication of the pest at a reasonable cost the service will be welcomed. South Australia, too, would welcome the knowledge because in that State it is one of the worst pests they have. How is it proposed to make the unfortunate owners of land eradicate the weed from their properties? I know that some of the graziers in my district have had considerable experience of this weed and they have found it impossible of eradication. In my opinion the Government may as well say "We are going to resume the land" because I am convinced the settlers will not be able to comply with the provisions of the Bill. I am familiar with an estate which the Government purchased in the South-West at a big figure, the object being to subdivide it. Are the Government prepared to guarantee to the new settlers freedom for the cost of eradicating the noxious weeds that are on it? If they do not, nobody will come forward to take up blocks. Several so-called noxious weeds have been proved to be quite good feed for stock. "Stinking Roger," for instance, does not make at all bad feed. It has been suggested that paspalum should be termed a noxious weed.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who called it a noxious weed?

Mr. PICKERING: The late Commissioner for the South-West said it should be termed a noxious weed. Yet we find that on the northern rivers of New South Wales paspalum is the main feed for dairy stock. Therefore it is quite possible that some of the noxious weeds for the eradication of which the unfortunate land owners are to be put to such heavy expense may ultimately prove of great benefit to the country.

The Minister for Agriculture: This is all second-hand information.

Mr. PICKERING: No doubt we shall have original information from the Minister when he replies. I think there will be a wide scatter among local authorities when it gets out that we propose to put such an impossible proposition upon them. Indeed, it is doubtful whether in such circumstances men will be found to stand for these honorary positions on local bodies. The



Bill says, further, that a certificate from the chairman and secretary as to the cost of eradicating noxious weeds shall be sufficient evidence in a court of law. To tackle some of the noxious weeds I have mentioned will involve a bill which very few land owners will be able to face. I give the Minister credit for a great deal of common sense, but in the matter of this Bill I think he has shown himself too hopeful. He would do well to postpone it. I am sorry I cannot support the second reading.

On Motion by Mr. Johnston debate adjourned.

## BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th January.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [9-35]: The Bill before members is a very simple one. The principal objection which can be lodged against it is that it is not comprehensive, and that it fails utterly to give a needed measure of justice to large numbers of workers engaged in various callings. It will be remembered that at various times attempts have been made to broaden the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act so as to make it include those who to-day are debarred from reaping the benefits of that measure. Such attempts have generally failed. The present Bill has its origin in a case which was taken from the Local Court to the Full Court, and thence to the High Court of Australia. The measure seeks to cure a flaw in the Act which the Full Court and the High Court have discovered. But it stops at that. The amendment is narrowly restricted. It will be noticed that the first provision includes only workers to whom a State award applies. I believe the Premier will agree to widen the Bill in that respect, causing it to include all workers working under awards. At least, an attempt in that direction will be made in Committee, so that the workers may have what is, after all, only a fair deal. There is absolutely no logical argument for withholding compensation from those who are working under Federal awards. Provision should also be made in this Bill to extend the operation of the parent Act to farmers' labourers such as clearers and well-sinkers. Men engaged in clearing land are in a similar position to those who are covered by the Bill. I venture to say no farmer or pastoralist would offer serious objection to paying the slight amount needed for the insurance of the people under his control. It may be contended that they are not under his control; but, after all, they are under his direction. The question of direction or control was the battleground in the case which prompted this Bill. A sleeper-cutter met his death while engaged in his occupation. It was pointed out by his virtual employers that the relationship of employer and employee did not exist; that is to say, that he was not subject to direction. The contention of the employers was that he could go to work when he liked, and knock off when he liked, and take a day off work when he liked.

The Minister for Works: He was working on piece work?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, but subject to the direction of the permit holders. He could not

operate on the stand of timber without first obtaining the sanction of the permit holders, who were the people employing him. They said to him, as they said to others, by the contract of service, "You go and produce sleepers for us at so much per load." While engaged in that occupation he was killed, and his dependants took the case into court. When the Act of 1912 was passed, I raised the point whether there was any ambiguity or doubt regarding such men being covered by its provisions. The Attorney General of that time said there was no doubt whatever. The Act operated fairly satisfactorily up to last year. No employer, except one, has ever sought to take advantage of it. In fact, there has been no attempt to take advantage of the decision of the High Court. At least, I have heard of only one case where advantage has been taken of the defect discovered in the Act. That defect was not admitted by the Crown Law Department. When the dependants were defeated in the lower court, the Crown Solicitor had not the slightest doubt that the decision was wrong; and therefore he recommended that the Government should bear the cost of an appeal to the Full Court. This the Government did, and the Full Court upheld the decision of the lower court. So confident was the Crown Solicitor still that this opinion was right and that the Act covered everything, that he recommended the Government to pay the further costs of an appeal to the High Court. The High Court has ruled against the dependants. In the absence of an amendment Act, that decision becomes binding. It means that many hundreds of men directly concerned are deprived of the benefit of the Workers' Compensation Act, and this notwithstanding that they are included as part and parcel of the award governing the timber industry. They have been paid compensation for many years—I think 18 or 20. It is only because of the decision of the Full Court and the High Court that those men find themselves outside the scope of the Act. A sleeper cutter cannot go into the forest and cut sleepers and wait for a buyer to come along. He has to work in accordance with the instructions of the man who holds the stand of timber. The parent Act contains a double-barrelled provision that if a sub-contractor steps in and employs men, then, failing the sub-contractor, the contractor himself is liable. Otherwise an employer could evade his obligations under the Workers' Compensation Act by setting up dummies who would not be worth a straw when it came to litigation. This measure is not one which need occasion much discussion on second reading. Indeed, there is not much to deal with in Committee either, unless the Premier refuses to accept amendments. The amendments which I have to propose are absolutely legitimate, and I hope they will be accepted so as to afford a measure of protection to people who to-day are deprived of the benefit of the Workers' Compensation Act. If it is thought that owing to the lateness of the session too much should not be attempted in this Bill, I can only say that the House ought to register an opinion on the subject. There need be no protracted debate. If it is not feasible on this occasion to include in the Bill all that I think should be included in it, I hope Parliament will have an opportunity of dealing with the matter next session. The point I have

dealt with firstly is that the Act should apply to men operating under any award, and not merely to men working under State awards. In point of fact, all the timber workers of this State are to-day operating under a Federal award. The only other provision of the Bill applies to group settlers. Naturally, I have no objection to that provision, but offer the Government my commendations on the subject. It is certainly a step forward. The people in question have not been included in the Act up to the present. I trust, therefore, that that provision will be adopted as well. The principal object is to enable an injured worker, or the dependants of a worker who is killed, to obtain compensation. The effect of passing the measure will be, without injustice to anyone, to clarify the position as regards a great many workers whom our law as it stands deprives of compensation. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [9:45]: I do not suppose there is to-day any person who has any other idea than that an industry should support those who work in it, and also protect them against contingencies that may arise. When the last speaker was addressing the House I interjected for the purpose of trying to get a little clearer statement in regard to the case of Elos. However, passing Elos out for the time being, let us take the broader question of men employed in the industry. A man has contracted to supply timber. He cannot do that unless he gets men to work for him, so he employs hewers on piece work, and carters at so much per load to cart the sleepers to the station. Here is a point that has come under my notice: There are men cutting sleepers on a certain property, and they work only when they choose. If they like to work three days a week, they work that and no longer. But that is not the whole point. The hon. member knows that if a man takes a contract to supply hewn sleepers for export he must get those sleepers cut quickly, so as to be ready to ship them when the boat comes along. If he cannot get the work to proceed continuously, he is placed in a false position, because he runs a big risk of not being able to fulfil his contract, and so may have to suffer penalties. If the industry not only provides employment but protects the men whom it employs, the employer certainly should have the right to say, and the power to impose that there shall be no stoppage of work without reasonable cause. I have in mind men who are hewing sleepers and who can hew sufficient to satisfy their wants in three days. Yet I presume if those men were on the ground on any of the other three days, and as the result of an accident suffered injury, the employer would be liable.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You know what the Act provides.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am satisfied that in such a case the employer would be mulct in damages. Apart from that, if the employer has to be responsible for compensation in case of accident, he certainly should be able to say, "If you take on my job, you must complete it so as to let me carry out my contract."

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Bill deals with that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These two clauses will make it certain in respect of the industry I am alluding to. The employer can insure himself against it, but some consideration should be shown to him when men will not do their work. I know a man earning £3 a day at hewing sleepers. He works only three days a week.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Would you mind letting me have his photograph?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He is on my property. The hon. member knows him quite well. I wish that man would work six days a week instead of three. I want the hon. member to get into his mind the two points I have put up to him.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9:50]: I congratulate the Premier on the introduction of the Bill, more particularly the clause dealing with the men in the group settlements. That they do not come under any award which would enable them to receive compensation in the case of accident, has caused many of the group settlers a good deal of worry. It is necessary that provision should be made to bring them under the Workers' Compensation Act. I went fully into the question of what could be done to give them that protection, so I am glad indeed that the Premier should have brought down the Bill providing the necessary protection. All the people engaged in the group settlements will be grateful to the Premier for the Bill. I will support the second reading.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9:53]: I will not oppose the second reading, although I should like to have seen a more comprehensive measure. There are in the Murchison district many workers not protected under the Act. Even this Bill will not protect the piece-work miner working under-ground. I do not think the Premier desires to persecute the mining industry by discouraging miners from taking on piece-work. Yet the Bill does not afford protection to that class of worker, merely because he undertakes to do certain work at a given rate. It cannot be termed contract work, because he does not enter into an agreement to fulfil any definite quantity of work in a given time. I hope the Premier will permit the Bill to be amended in Committee so as to give protection to those piece-workers in mines. Then there are also employees on pastoral leases on the Murchison and in outback districts who are in like position.

The Premier: I thought they were protected.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, they are not. We have had a case under consideration. A man was sinking a well at a given price per foot—

The Premier: That is contract.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, it is not. He did not undertake to complete the well or even to take it to any given depth. It was simply piece-work. He could break off relations with his employer when he chose, and leave him. The agreement was merely so much per foot for the sinking. Such a worker is in exactly the same category as those who come under the Bill. I can quote an instance of a pastoralist

employee on the Murchison who had one hand practically blown off. I took his case to the Crown Law Department to see if he had any legal claim on his employer. They cited the case already quoted by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlin) and declared the man had no legal claim under the Workers' Compensation Act. So it is of no use the Premier saying that this class of worker is protected.

The Premier: I understood those on pastoral holdings were protected.

Mr. MARSHALL: Under the Bill the miner who decided to shift ore at 1d. per truck would be deprived of compensation, although his fellow worker, doing the same work in the same place, would be entitled to full compensation. What is the difference between those workers and the men sinking wells or erecting windmills on pastoral leases? All are rendering valuable services to society, and so are justly entitled to whatever protection is afforded to other workers. In Committee I will attempt to see that all classes of workers are equally protected under the Bill. I do not know why the Premier should even hesitate to put all workers not actually contractors on the same footing in point of protection.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [10.0]: I am disappointed with the Bill before us.

The Premier: Then we will take it away.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier might as well do so.

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

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: This is a Bill for the special purpose of dealing with a case that came before the High Court in connection with a worker in the timber industry. I remember the case of a man who was engaged by the Government in clearing operations at Newdegate. This man was working on piece work, receiving £1 per acre for chopping down timber, and scrubbing. He lost an eye. There was no compensation forthcoming in his case. There are many other instances of a similar character, in connection with men working on clearing operations for agricultural purposes. The position is well known to the Premier. We have brought the matter before him on several occasions with a view to getting justice for the man who was deprived of the sight of his eye. In the face of that information the Premier brings down a Bill to deal with one particular industry, covering men engaged in felling, hauling, cartage, sawing or milling of timber. Where is the distinction between a man felling timber for saw milling purposes, and a man employed in clearing operations for agricultural purposes?

The Premier: The one is under control.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: This applies to piece workers. The man who is clearing land at 25s. or 30s. an acre is a piece worker.

The Premier: He is a contractor.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: This also applies to men working in mines. Their claims have been recognised by mine owners up to the present, but because of the recent judgment given in the State Courts, the day may arrive when a man's right will be questioned. Instead of having a Bill to cover all these workers and giving them com-

pensation we will have the Government bringing down Bill after Bill, as they have done in this case, dealing with the matter in a piecemeal fashion. They do not propose to cover the men engaged in clearing operations, although they are the most neglected and underpaid workers in the State.

The Premier: We are trying to do something for them, but you do not want anything done.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It is the Premier who wants to do nothing, otherwise he would have embodied all this in the Bill.

The Premier: It is always the same on Bills of this kind.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I want a measure of relief for those men engaged in developing the State. There are numbers of men whose cases are similar to that of Thomson who lost his eye at Newdegate.

The Premier: He was a contractor.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: There are scores of married men engaged in clearing operations in agricultural areas. Accidents occur to them, but this Bill makes no provision to include them in the Workers' Compensation Act. We expect people to obey the laws of the country and yet deny them the rights they should be entitled to as workers. We have been asked on several occasions why men will not leave the city and work in the country. We have also been told that they do not desire to work for the support of their wives and families. We know that risks have to be taken in clearing operations, and in the event of a man becoming disabled by cutting his foot or—

The Premier: Being run over by a motor car!

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Losing an arm or becoming fatally injured, there is no compensation to come for those dependent upon him. The Premier proposes deliberately to exclude them from this Bill.

The Premier: I do not propose to do so.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: But he has done so.

The Premier: I have included some people. I do not care whether you go on with the Bill or not.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We do care. In paragraph (c) of Clause 2 it is proposed to extend the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act to persons under the control of group settlements, that is to say under the scheme of group settlements on Crown lands. Perhaps in Committee we shall get some information on this. What does it mean? Does it refer to artisans such as carpenters, blacksmiths, and other workers who are erecting homes for the settlers, or does it refer to the men engaged there, who will become settlers on the group settlement scheme.

The Premier: Certainly.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Then on the one hand we are providing for men engaged on clearing operations under the group settlement scheme, and bringing them under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, and on the other are deliberately excluding other men working in a similar occupation for employers, namely in clearing agricultural land. I am not anxious for the Bill. It is a tinkering piece of legislation, such as we have had placed before us during the last week. The time has arrived—

The Premier: Now that we have all the wisdom you can pour out we can get on.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: When an amending Act of a general character should be brought down covering all the workers of the State.

The Premier: Covering everyone, employers, contractors, members of Parliament, and so on. Why not?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Premier and others have complained that men will not go out into the agricultural areas and take employment.

The Premier: Because they are told to come to the city.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: They are excluded from the rights to which they should be entitled.

The Premier: No.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We are doing so with our eyes open. I shall, however, support the second reading, and in Committee will try to improve the Bill and give some small measure of relief to those who are entitled to it. I do not think any member who has workers in the constituency he represents is satisfied with the Bill.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [10-10]: I had hoped the Premier would have broadened the meaning of the word "worker" in the Workers' Compensation Act so as to include all workers. Men who take contracts cease to be workers. In many instances if they happen to employ one man they become an employer within the meaning of the Act. There is the well known case of Corcoran and party versus the Great Fingal. This party took a contract from the mine and employed one man as trucker. They thus ceased to become workers and became employers. Corcoran met with an accident and took action under the Workers' Compensation Act. It was held that he had ceased to be a worker and had become an employer of labour. In many cases these contracts are "takes." A price is set down for the work and people can take it at that price or leave it. The workers are often compelled to accept the price offered.

The Premier: They are contractors.

Mr. CHESSON: It is a "take." A contract is that which is open for competition.

The Premier: He takes all he can get.

Mr. CHESSON: A "take" is something upon which the price is laid down. These people, however, cease to become workers under the Act and are no longer entitled to compensation. I had a case sometime ago in connection with the pastoral industry. A employee contracted yoke poisoning while in pursuit of his calling. The doctor certified to the fact that this was the case. The man received advice and was told he did not come under the Act for compensation. It was not a case of an accident. The Act should be broadened so as to include all classes of workers. I fail to see what difference there is between the one class of worker and the other. The Act distinctly defines that a worker is a man who receives less than £400 a year. I suppose we shall have to be thankful for small mercies, for this Bill does include timber workers, and men engaged on group settlements. I hope the Premier will next session bring down a Bill to cover all classes of workers. He may have been afraid to make this Bill too comprehensive lest it should suffer at the hands of another place.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [10-15]: I regret that the Bill is not more comprehensive. It can easily be made more embracing by amendment in Committee. We had a case of a man who was injured at Kurrawang but it was held he was not a worker within the meaning of the Workers' Compensation Act, but that he was a contractor. I believe there is a clause in the leases now, under which workers come under the Workers' Compensation Act and can get compensation. I hope members will agree to amendments which will extend the scope of the Act. The Bill will do a small amount of good but it can easily be made a more useful measure. It will be easy to include workers who are excluded at the present time.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [10-16]: I regret, in common with other members, that the Bill does not go as far as it might. When we are dealing with it in Committee, I intend to move an amendment to include certain workers, who were specifically excluded from the 1912 Act. I refer to men engaged in the fishing industry.

The Premier: Men who are fishing for themselves?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, for employers. They were excluded from the 1912 Act and I have looked through "Hansard" but I can find no reason which was advanced for their exclusion. They are following an occupation as workers, and they go to work on the fishing boats just the same as any other worker would proceed to his work. The only difference is that these men are paid by way of a share of the proceeds when the catch is disposed of. The men may be away on the boats for anything from five to 15 days and when they come back, the catch is disposed of and they make on an average £4 a week. If these men meet with any accident, there is no compensation for them because they are specifically excluded from the operations of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Mann: Are they not partners in the business?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, that is the method of payment. They get a share of the proceeds of the catch when it is disposed of. I do not know why these men were excluded. Their income is not more than that of the average worker. They incur the same risks in connection with their calling and they do not receive adequate recompense for the work they do. I cannot understand why they should not come under the Act. Yet I find that under Subsection 4 of Section 12 of the Act, they were specifically barred from securing the benefits which are received by other workers. I think we should strike out that subsection which directly affects the men engaged in the fishing industry and give them protection which is afforded to other workers. I intend to move in that direction when we are considering the Bill in Committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [10-19]: I do not think we should go further than is suggested in the Bill. I was specially asked by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) to bring forward this amendment. In fact it is the result of a court case.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Crown Law Department said it was necessary.

The PREMIER: The case went to the High Court and we found that although apparently the man concerned came within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act, he could not get compensation. In those circumstances, we agreed to bring forward the amendment. In cases where it is clear that the worker is under supervision, there can be no question of the justice of the amendment. If, however, hon. members intend to move to include a large number of workers in various occupations, I think it only fair to give more time to the consideration of the question, because the employers and the public generally, as well as the men themselves, should know what it is proposed to do, and they should have some time to examine the proposals. I do not know the Act sufficiently well to say how far it does go, but I do know that it goes a long way. If a man is a contractor and is not under supervision, he should insure himself. A man may have a contract and be working 200 miles away from the man who lets the contract. He may, or may not, be engaged on the individual's property when an accident occurs. If there is no supervision, I do not know how there can be any responsibility on the part of the employer. This is a big question and I do not wish to argue it at the present stage. In the case of a contractor, he has to pay the premium and the contract is valued at so much, less the premiums which have to be paid.

Mr. Chesson: Those men are under supervision.

The PREMIER: There is a difference between a man who is working under supervision and the man who is working as a contractor, and not under supervision. Hon. members will be acting wisely if they allow the Bill to go through as it stands. If they desire to move amendments, ample time should be given to those concerned to consider the position and permit them to advise their representatives as to what they wish. The question of compensation is always a vexed one. We have considered it on many occasions and it has always caused difficulty.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you bring down a comprehensive measure next session, if these matters are not proceeded with at present?

The PREMIER: I do not know about that. It is not an easy thing to pilot such a Bill through the House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not possible for a private member to bring an amending Bill forward.

The PREMIER: When the question was before the Chamber last time, all sorts of propositions were put forward. At one stage members wanted to know if a man were employed to paint a window and an accident occurred, the householder would be responsible for compensation. Of course, the householder would not be responsible but the people should know where the responsibility lies. Otherwise, it will cause a lot of trouble. It is a serious thing to any worker if he meets with an accident, and thinking that he is covered by the Workers' Compensation Act, later finds that he is not so covered. Hardship is often experienced because many men would insure themselves if they knew they were not covered by the Workers'

Compensation Act. I know the difficulties, as well as any other man. I am willing to give consideration to any proposition which is brought forward but if we are to amend the Bill, it is only fair to me to give me some notice of the amendments proposed, so that the matter can be gone into carefully. It would be wise to pass the Bill as it stands. That is only a fair thing. I hope the Bill will be passed in its present form.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I propose to move an amendment to paragraph (a) of Clause 2. It refers to any person to whose service "any industrial award or agreement under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, applies." By the elimination of the words "under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912," it will mean that the Bill will apply to any person employed under any industrial award or agreement. Some workers are employed under a Federal award and if the paragraph be agreed to as it stands, it may be held that they are excluded, seeing that the paragraph refers specifically to awards or agreements under the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912.

The Premier: Why not agree to make it read, "Any person to whose service any industrial award or agreement under any Industrial Arbitration Act applies."

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Why should it not apply to a Federal award or agreement?

The Premier: It would, under the amended form I suggest.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am advised that the best way of getting over the difficulty is in the direction I suggest. I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of paragraph (a) the words "under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912," be struck out.

The PREMIER: I do not know why the member for Forrest will not agree to the amendment I suggested.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It has been represented to me that my amendment is the correct one.

The PREMIER: I have not had time to examine the position, but if the words are required, we shall have to re-insert them later on.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The objection is obvious. This Bill would apply to only those operating under an award of the court or an agreement registered under the 1912 Act. Therefore it would exclude men working under the Federal award, and the very men whom it is desired to benefit are under a Federal award.

The Premier: I suggest "under any award."

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The amendment will attain the Premier's object.

The Premier: I want it understood that if the position is not as you say I shall alter it later on.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not trying to score a point.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I move an amendment—

That after "felling" in paragraph (b) the word "hewing" be inserted.

There may be some doubt as to whether hewers will be covered, and the amendment will remove all doubt.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Does "person" imply any company or firm?

The CHAIRMAN: The Interpretation Act lays down that "person" includes a body corporate.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—

That after "industry" in line 4 of paragraph (b) the words "or clearing, well sinking, or dam construction" be inserted.

The great bulk of the men engaged on such work insure, and the companies take the money knowing that these men do not come under the Act.

Mr. Mann: One company paid £85 to a man on contract who lost one of his fingers.

Mr. McCALLUM: That man struck a good company.

The PREMIER: Does the member for South Fremantle mean men engaged on contract and otherwise?

Mr. McCallum: Yes.

The PREMIER: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. It is not advisable at this stage to attempt more than is proposed in the Bill. If a man has a contract for clearing, there is no reason why he should not insure himself. The amendment, however, would cover all men employed by a contractor. If I let a contract to a man and he without my knowledge employed other men to do the work, I would be responsible.

Mr. McCallum: We have repeatedly asked for this.

The PREMIER: Yes, I know. But when a man takes a contract he should cover his own risk.

Mr. Cunningham: His earnings are scarcely enough to live on. You know that.

The PREMIER: I do not know it. The contractor makes good money. It is in his own hands. The timber hewer earns anything up to £2 per day, and the contractor does even better. However, I do not wish to argue against the inclusion of people since I have not had time to go carefully into the position. It is not reasonable to insert an amendment that will cover everybody. I hope the hon. member will not persist with his amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Even at this late stage the Premier might give us an assurance that amending legislation of a comprehensive nature will be brought down next session. All through the country there is a big outcry for it. I admit it would involve us in a long debate to get the comprehensive amendment we are seeking, but the Premier might well give us an assurance that next session he will take steps to protect those engaged in clearing, well sinking, dam construction and the like.

Mr. McCALLUM: I want to join with the member for Forrest in appealing to the Premier

for an assurance that a comprehensive measure will be brought down next session. I have repeatedly taken to the Premier deputations asking for amendments to the Act. Insurance companies have attempted a course that will inevitably undermine the whole construction of the existing Act, and we have asked to have the position protected in an amending Bill. In the existing Act are many loopholes. It is urgently necessary that the Act should be brought up to date and the workers placed on the footing they enjoy in other countries. Cold hard facts and cash alone appeal to insurance companies. It is unfair to leave it to such people to take advantage of the many weaknesses in our obsolete Act.

The PREMIER: Although we have had discussions from time to time, I do not pretend to know exactly what the two members who now appeal to me require. If they will let me know what they have in mind, I will see what can be done to meet their wishes. Although I cannot promise to do all that is asked of me, I will at least seriously consider whatever those members have to put before me.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 25th January, 1923.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

### BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX ACT, 1922, AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Has the Minister consulted the law authorities as to whether the section in the principal Act should stand as