

venience to the profession, and I do not think hon. members will have any objection to it. The principal clause of the Bill I am asking the House to agree to is the 4th. Hon. members will see by Section 203 of the principal Act, that any foreign company carrying on business in this colony, contrary to the provisions of the Act, is liable to a penalty of £20, besides which it cannot proceed in any court of law without first showing that it has complied with previous sections of the Act as to registration, &c. In the case of a foreign company wishing to sue for any small debt, it is necessary to call an officer of the Supreme Court to prove the registration of the company and other matters, and this involves considerable expense without any necessity for it. On the goldfields especially it is very difficult for a company to sue unless it is prepared to go to the expense of bringing an officer all the way from Perth. I propose to rectify this by providing that when a foreign company is registered here, and has complied with the Act, the Registrar shall issue a certificate, which shall be evidence in any court of law of the incorporation of the company, as in the case of local companies. I do not propose to carry the Bill beyond the second reading to-day, because I wish to make Clause 4, as it appears in the Bill, somewhat clearer before we go into committee. I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: I desire to say that I have gone through this Bill, and I think it contains very desirable amendments. I had the honour of drawing the Companies Act for the Government, and I regret that it did not strike me to insert such clauses as these at the time. At Cue I fail to see how a company could sue at all for a small debt, because the expense of bringing an officer of the Court as a witness would probably exceed the amount of the debt. Under this Bill the necessary formalities may be proved in the case of a foreign company in the same way that they are proved in the case of a local company—namely, by the production of the certificate of registration which is issued by the Registrar.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.
Debate adjourned accordingly.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (MARRIED WOMEN'S) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 4.55 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, August 5th, 1896, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th July, 1896.

Deeds of Arrangement Bill; first reading—Motion: Inquiry into causes of high price of meat—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill; third reading—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill; second reading—Adoption of Children Bill; in committee—Constitution Act Amendment (Redistribution of Seats) Bill; second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

DEEDS OF ARRANGEMENT BILL.

Introduced by Mr. Moss, and read a first time.

MOTION—INQUIRY INTO CAUSES OF HIGH PRICE OF MEAT.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved "That a Joint Select Committee of both Houses be appointed to inquire into the causes of the present high price of meat, and to suggest such means

as may appear most desirable for the purpose of effecting a reduction in the price of good, wholesome meat to the consumer, without too seriously endangering the future of the pastoral interests." It will not need many words from me to recommend this motion to the consideration of hon. members. Many of us are aware that the community, generally, are not at all satisfied with the manner in which they are supplied with butcher's meat, nor with the quality or the price. The information we have lately had placed before us, in the report of the Chief Inspector of Stock, emphasises very strongly the necessity of examination into this question; and such an inquiry is of paramount importance to the people resident in the chief towns, and of no less importance to the producers of meat. The complaint of the consumer is that he has to pay an enormous price for his meat, and the complaint of the producer is that he does not get his fair share of the price paid. There is no question that the condition of the pastoral interest at the present time in this colony is not one which can stand very great depression beyond what it is suffering at present; and, therefore, it is important that this House should appoint a Select Committee to look closely into the whole matter, and recommend some method by which an improvement may be instituted.

MR. MORAN: This House will remember that last session a very animated discussion took place on this very question, and I think there were a division or two affecting the price of meat, both fresh and tinned, and also the import duty that is placed on live stock. I do not know whether the mover of this motion voted in favour of the removal of the 30s. per head stock tax, or whether he voted against it. It is the last part of this motion that strikes me as rather damaging to the rest of it. It reads: "That a Joint Select Committee of both Houses be appointed to inquire into the causes of the present high price of meat, and to suggest such means as may appear most desirable for the purpose of effecting a reduction in the price of good, wholesome meat to the consumer." I think it might well have stopped there, and that it should not go on to say: "Without too seriously endangering the future of the pastoral interests." We know that it does not require a very long and earnest considera-

tion of this question to arrive at the truth of it, and that is, that the most popular belief is that the pastoral interest of the colony, and also the butchering ring of this city, are keeping up the price of meat. To the ordinary eye it would appear, at once, that the first step to be taken for reducing the price of meat should be to allow cattle to be imported into this colony, for slaughtering purposes, free of duty. It does not require two moments' consideration to arrive at that conclusion. We know that these very-much-protected pastoralists cannot grow anything like one-half sufficient meat to supply the requirements of this colony, and yet there is an import duty of 30s. per head on live stock; whilst we know, at the same time, that any new arrival from other colonies or from the old country is struck dumb at the enormous price of meat in this colony, especially when he finds that in the most populous parts of the colony, and in Perth, as its most populous centre, he has to pay 9d. a lb. for meat.

THE PREMIER: No; not so much as that.

MR. RANDELL: One and sixpence a pound has been charged in Perth.

MR. MORAN: It is evident the Premier has not had time to look over his household accounts. I say that even if the price were 7d. or 8d., it is an extraordinary fact that in all the Eastern seaboard of Australia, meat, at this time, can be bought at one-third or one-fourth the price now charged by the butchers in Western Australia; and this is the price charged here at a time when Australia sends frozen meat 13,000 miles to England to feed the enormous population, and what is called the submerged tenth of the great cities of the old country. Meat from Australia can be sent all that distance, and sold retail in shops at a price only about one-half of what is charged in Western Australia. I was much struck the other night with the Premier's utterances on the Coolgardie Water Supply Bill, when he referred so tenderly to the working man, and gave a dismal picture to this House in describing how no miner on the goldfields could afford to bring his family, and keep them on the fields, because of the high cost for water; but I may tell the Premier now, as the representative of those goldfields

in this House, that the two factors militating against the increase of population on the goldfields—against the miners bringing their families there—are, firstly, the enormous cost of the necessaries of life, and, secondly, the high cost of meat; these causes together being twice as injurious in their effect as the high cost of water, upon which the Premier laid so much stress. I can assure him that what mainly keeps back families from settling on the goldfields is the high price of meat, together with the high cost of other necessaries of life; these being a greater hindrance to the bringing of miners' families into this colony, than any other cause. There are three great causes operating against the populating of the goldfields by the settlement of families. One is that men who want to bring their families there cannot get homesteads to settle on—they cannot get residential areas without a lot of trouble. The second cause is the high cost of the necessaries of life, which are too high to enable miners to keep their families on the goldfields. Thirdly, the high price of meat, which deters settlement much more than the high price of water.

THE PREMIER: You are changing your opinion.

MR. MORAN: No; I am not; and, even if I had changed my opinion, a man's latest utterances may be taken to have a certain amount of weight. I say the high cost of meat in this colony is a standing disgrace to the Legislature. I say it is a standing disgrace, also, that men should come into this House, and contend, tooth and nail, for keeping an obnoxious duty on imported cattle in order to put money in their own pockets, while thousands of poor families have to pay the increased price resulting from that tax. Surely, if people in the other colonies can grow meat and send it here at a profit, the pastoralists in the Kimberley district of our own colony, and other portions of it, who are not farther away in point of distance, ought to be able to compete on fair terms against the imported stock. We are also told by these gentlemen themselves that land in the Kimberley district is equally as good and fertile, and is equally as capable of growing cattle, as any land in Australia. Why, then, should we put this terrible impost on meat? A halfpenny a pound may

appear a small matter, but it amounts to 30s. a head on a bullock, and that is 100 per cent. increase on the cost price at which stock can be bought wholesale in other colonies for importation here. I told the Premier last year that he could buy good beasts in Queensland for 30s. to £3 a head; therefore, imagine 100 per cent. increase on the cost price when the butchers sell that meat to consumers in this colony! It seems ridiculous that we, who cannot grow half enough meat for the people of this colony, and cannot do without meat, should yet put a handicap of 75 to 100 per cent. on the price, as compared with the price at which the meat can be bought wholesale elsewhere. The tax also prevents people from stocking this country with store cattle. The member for West Kimberley interjects that store cattle are fat cattle, but I say store cattle are not fat cattle. He knows he is cutting the truth very close in saying that. In connection with this motion, I should have liked to see the Government taking this matter up, and giving a bonus to some individual or company who will go in largely for importing frozen meat from other colonies into Western Australia. The Government might well do this, especially with half a million of surplus revenue, and thus encourage and assist those who wish to supply the colony with good marketable meat at a reasonable cost. This would, in the most effectual manner, do good to the colony. At present the people are actually deterred from coming to settle here owing to the high cost of living. If every man, woman, and child added to the population is worth from £3 to £4 per annum to the colony through the Customs, the loss of a few hundreds or thousands of pounds would be more than justified if the effect was to encourage the settlement here of the families of the 50,000 men on our goldfields. And what would be the effect on those producers who are now protected? A few persons would, perhaps, lose by the consequent increased competition in the stock trade; but it would make them more energetic in using the lands they have by working them to better advantage. Look at the Kimberley district, for instance: where now only ten bullocks are being raised on a run, the land would turn out hundreds. I hope this will be the attitude of the select

committee, and that they will report to the House recommending the immediate removal of the stock tax. Whether the effect of that tax on the price of meat is real or imaginary, it is certain that in the Eastern colonies the consumer has not to pay such a high price for his meat as we have.

THE PREMIER: The other colonies also have a stock tax.

MR. MORAN: But they are not in the same position as we are. We cannot grow half enough meat for our own people, whereas the other colonies grow enough to export. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion, but would prefer to see the latter part omitted. Of course this simply means that the committee will take all sides of the question into consideration, but we, as consumers, can only take one fact into consideration, and that is that meat is 9d. or 10d. per lb., and that price has to be paid when we have markets for the meat in all parts of the colony. The fact that the squatters in the Kimberley district, having a fair field and no favour, do not take full advantage of all their opportunities, must reflect upon themselves as business men. I am glad to have had the opportunity of saying a few words in support of this motion.

MR. A. FORREST: Speaking to this very important question, I intend to support the motion of the hon. member for Beverley, because I think the object he has in view is a good one; but I am sorry to hear in this enlightened House the hon. member for Yilgarn speaking on a subject which he understands little or nothing about, and placing before this House, as facts, statements and figures which are altogether erroneous. I would like to ask hon. members if the retail cost of meat—which one member says is 1s. 6d. per lb., which is excessive, and others say is 6d., 7d., or 8d. a pound—is so high as is stated; and seeing that this market is open to meat from all parts of the world, whether the removal of a duty equal to only $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. would make any material difference in the cost of imported meat, or would cheapen the price to consumers. Surely the fact would commend itself to the intelligence of squatters in the Eastern colonies, if they saw an opportunity for placing first-class stock in this market with a duty of only $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

per lb. on it, that it would be profitable to send meat here, if producers are getting large prices for meat grown in the colony.

MR. MORAN: They would be opposed by the butchers' ring.

MR. A. FORREST: The stock is offered for sale here by public auction, and values are determined in open market. At the most, the tax only amounts to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

MR. MORAN: It is 30s. per head.

MR. A. FORREST: So far as I am personally concerned, and speaking as a squatter, I should not care if the duty were to be taken off. It would, in fact, mean thousands of pounds more profit to my firm, as importers of stock, if the duty were taken off. So long as you tax the squatters' chaff, flour, corn, butter, and nearly everything they use, they have a right to ask for a certain amount of protection in return, provided it is reasonable; or, if you strike off these duties, the squatter will be prepared to forego the stock tax. Those who have been in the pastoral industry know how unprofitable it is; and that has been my experience during the last ten years.

MR. MORAN: Why don't you chuck it up, then?

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member says, why don't I "chuck it up." I am not in a position to do so. Those financial institutions which have advanced the money to improve pastoral properties are not prepared to release me or others from our obligations; but if the hon. member for Yilgarn thinks that stock raising is such a very profitable business, I should be glad to transfer large pastoral properties to him for the amount owing on the stations, and any further liability to the bank—that is, if the bank will take his name instead of mine. Unless you agree to take the duties off the goods used by Northern settlers, why should they not have some measure of protection? They have a very hard life—I would say no class in the colony has a harder life; for they are subject to droughts and floods, while the cost of bringing their stock to market is enormous. Bullocks which we could afford to sell at £6 on the stations, have to be charged at the rate of £10 a head in the market, owing to the heavy cost of transit and the losses. We can sell cattle in Kimberley,

before shipment, cheaper than they can be bought for in any colony, excepting Queensland. Although the hon. member states that stock can be bought at £2 to £2 10s. per head in the Eastern colonies, I can prove that, in Melbourne at the present time, best joints fetch 7d. or 8d. per lb. The importations coming to the colony at the present time are brought here because this is the nearest market, and there is little or no profit to the importer. I can say, from 20 years' experience, that I have never seen a butcher making his fortune. I understand that the object of the suggested committee is to ascertain whether there are any means of reducing the price of meat to the consumer. I hope that the difficulties and dangers attendant on the importation of stock will not be lost sight of, as well as the fact that the price of meat in the Eastern colonies has lately risen. In June last our firm imported a large quantity of bullocks, and on one shipment we lost £3,000, being equal to more than half the cattle on board. We were unable to effect insurance, and when the remainder of the cattle were landed of course the limited supply increased the cost to the consumer, and we lost £3,000 on the transaction. I have not met anyone who has made his fortune by importing live stock into this colony. Our firm has had to pay the ½d. per lb. of duty as well as others. If you can show the producers of meat in South Australia and Victoria that they will, by paying only a halfpenny per lb. of duty, get 8d. per lb. nett for their meat, prices will fall at least 50 per cent. A few producers elsewhere have tried the experiment by sending their excess cattle over here, and what is the result? The expenses were so enormous that it was impossible to make the operation pay. Personally I should be glad to see the stock tax taken off; but the people in our Northern districts should receive greater help than they have had already. The halfpenny per pound is certainly a little help, but on the stock our firm has imported there have been frequent losses. I shall support the motion, as I believe the mover's intention is good; but as to the allegation that the import duty is the cause of the high price of meat to consumers, I deny that altogether.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I shall support the motion of the hon. member for

Beverley, but, at the same time, I wish to point out that there is no possible chance of effecting the object in view—a reduction in the high price of meat—as that does not come within the range of this House, owing to its relation to those mysteries of trade over which we have no power. We do not know how the hon. member intends to examine the question—whether he intends also to recommend the removal of the duty on frozen or tinned meat. No possible good can come out of this motion, because we cannot deal with all the intricacies of business, nor is it desirable that this House should do so. I cannot see what purpose this motion can serve, unless it is to ascertain the desirability or otherwise of retaining the present duty on stock. I know nothing about butchering—except that I pay my butcher's bill, and it is not a very large one—and I do not want to know anything; but in the course of business I have been in communication with one of the butchering firms of Victoria, and those people, for eighteen months, have been writing to me with the object of getting information in reference to this market. I have been repeatedly assured by that firm—and I give this statement from one of the largest firms in Victoria for what it is worth—that they would establish business relations with this market if it were not for the stock tax. If the market is strong and the profits are high, because there is a limited supply and not sufficient competition, anything that will tend in the direction of healthy competition must necessarily reduce the middleman's profits. We have been informed that the grower is not getting anything near the price that is being charged to the consumer, and that the grower does not make a profit. Of course the butcher, like everyone else, must have his profit; but the difference between the price charged by the vendor of the stock and the price charged by the retailer of the meat is very great indeed. It is said this difference does not go to the grower, and, if this be so, and if the market interests are sufficiently strong to keep down competition, it is clear that if we can introduce into this colony meat from other places, competition will be induced, and the price must necessarily fall. If we go in this direction, I think something can be done;

but I cannot see how any good can be done unless the two questions to which I have referred are dealt with. The hon. member for West Kimberley argued that if the duty is to be taken off stock, some consideration should be shown to the pastoral industry. Last year a Bill was passed by this House which took the duty off woolpacks—distinctly in the interest of pastoralists. The duty was also taken off fencing wire, and off tea and sugar. [MR. A. FORREST: For the miners.] These concessions distinctly apply to the question at issue. As far as I am concerned, and also others on this side of the House, we shall be glad to act on the suggestion of the hon. member for West Kimberley, and take the duty off flour and breadstuffs, but this course would meet with very strong opposition.

THE PREMIER: You would take half the revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; these items bring in only about £130,000 a year. The Premier knows quite as well as I do that taking off some duties does not affect the revenue.

THE PREMIER: If you take it all, what then?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: By taking the duties off the necessities of life you do not materially affect the revenue, because the surplus money is spent on those things which pay a larger tribute to the revenue. [THE PREMIER: Question?] Experience teaches that fact. There is free trade in New South Wales, and in Great Britain, where one-third of the revenue comes from spirits and tobacco. It is an established fact that the removal of duties from the necessities of life never materially affects any Treasurer's funds, and the Premier can look the facts up. The only suggestion I have to offer with regard to our fiscal relation to the other colonies in this connection is, that the stock tax and the duty on chilled meat should be taken off, and this removal would lead to larger importations. Existing conditions leave it open for the middleman to obtain a much higher price than he would ordinarily obtain in this colony, and consequently the consumer is compelled to pay a high price. When I first went to the Murchison I got mutton at Cue for 4d. or 5d. a lb., and the stations at the time did supply at these rates; but in consequence of the increasing population

and bad seasons, and a consequent decreased supply of meat, the price at the Murchison has been very materially raised. Now the inland markets are competing with city markets, and because of this state of things the inland markets have excessively high rates. Even in centres of population like Perth and Fremantle, to which stock is shipped, we pay at a higher rate than the people on the goldfields, simply because they are near the stations where the stock is raised. But as the supply is not equal to the demand, the stock brought from Kimberley and other places generally goes to the goldfields, and not to Perth or Fremantle. If competition is hindered by the existence of this duty, the only good that can possibly arise out of this motion will be in the direction of having the duty removed. I take it that the hon. member desires to consider this phase of the question, and from that standpoint I will support the motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): I think, perhaps, some hon. members have missed the purport of what the hon. member who moved this motion said in moving it. The hon. member for Nannine seems to think this motion means a recommendation in the direction of taking the duty off meat, that no other purpose could be fulfilled by the motion, and that it would not be feasible for Parliament to deal with it any other way. Whether the hon. member's object is in relation to the duty on meat, I cannot say. I can easily see that there are other courses open for the select committee to inquire into, with a view to making a recommendation that will have a very considerable effect in the cheapening of meat. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Abattoirs?] Yes; that is one, because we must remember that, while producers complain that they do not get anything like a proportionate share of the high price of meat, yet the butchers, on the other hand, say they are not making fortunes. I believe that if the butchers were relieved of the necessity of keeping separate slaughtering establishments and separate staffs, and if the present clumsy and expensive system, which involves great waste, were abolished, the price of meat could be reduced. If the select committee can recommend this method to

be adopted here, as is the case in other large communities, I believe it will have the effect of reducing the price of meat to the consumer, while at the same time not lessening the profit to the growers or the butchers. If that end can be achieved, I think all hon. members will admit it is a happy and desirable result to aim at. Some of the statements made by the hon. member for Yilgarn were somewhat rash—to put it mildly. Some of his arguments cut themselves into pieces. He says, for instance, that the importers who bring over live stock are charged equal to 100 per cent. in this duty of 30s. per head. He says bullocks can be purchased at 30s. or 40s. per head; and, estimating the price at £2, with duty added, making £3 10s., I am surprised that the market here, where bullocks realise from £10 to £13, is not flooded with importations. There must be something wrong in these calculations, which might be worked differently. Say: carcase £2, duty £1 10s., and freight £4; these items bring up the total cost of a bullock to £7 10s.; and, adding to these charges the risk of shipping, would yet make the nett cost little more than £8, according to the hon. member's estimate, and as they could get over £12 here, surely if his assertion is correct that the first cost of carcase is only about £2, the market would be simply rushed. I think we will find the chances of profits to the local producer and the importer are pretty evenly balanced; and, after all, when the question is reduced to its essence, it only amounts to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. for the import duty. Any member who claims to be a protectionist will recognise that we must always be prepared to pay a little higher, in support of the principle. I do not believe that the hon. member for Nanine can be a protectionist at all; and, so far as his objections are concerned, I believe his chief principle is contradiction. I do not see any justification in protecting any one section of the community at the expense of the other sections; but it is only fair, when we extend protection to one section of the community, to extend it to others. The hon. member's motion might well pass, as it may result in the adoption of some plan by which the cost of meat can be reduced to the consumer. That is the goal.

Question put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover, were elected to serve on the committee:—Mr. Higham, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Randell, and Mr. Richardson.

Mr. HARPER moved that the committee have power to sit on those days over which the House stands adjourned, and also have power to call for persons and papers, and report upon Wednesday, 12th August.

Agreed to.

Ordered—That the resolution of the House be transmitted to the Legislative Council, with the request that they elect a similar committee to join with the committee of the Assembly, for the purpose aforesaid.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. MOSS, in moving the second reading, said: I have the honour of moving the second reading of a Bill amending the Municipal Institutions Act that was passed last session. It appears that a mistake was made in the passing of that Bill, in omitting to provide for the licensing of weighbridges by municipalities; and I understand that several municipalities are anxious to license weighbridges, and that, at the present time, they have not the power to do so. This Bill provides for the licensing of weighbridges by municipalities. It also gives the municipalities power to make by-laws regulating the use of weighbridges. Further, as will be seen in the last clause of the Bill, the councils, if they think proper, may erect weighbridges of their own, and charge fees for the use of them. I think the measure will be found a useful one, and I do not suppose any hon. member will have any objection to it. I propose the second reading, and shall suggest a day a week hence for the consideration in committee, in order that, if any member has any other amendment to propose with regard to the Act passed last session, he may bring it forward, as

I do not think it is a good thing to be always tinkering with important measures—especially a measure like the one I propose to amend, and which received considerable attention last session.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in committee, agreed to without amendment, and reported.

Report adopted.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

(REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.)

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: I have much pleasure in rising to move the second reading of this Constitution Act Amendment Bill. I think it is a matter that we should congratulate ourselves upon, that the country has reached so quickly, since the last general election, a stage when it becomes necessary to increase the representation of the people. Hon. members will notice that this Bill proposes to increase the representation in this House by 10 members, and also to increase the representation in the Legislative Council by three members. I do not think any one of us could have foreseen, some two years ago, when we had the last general election, that at so early a period we should have to devote ourselves to the amendment of the Constitution in the direction that this Bill takes. More than that, I do not think any one who has lived in this colony any length of time could have anticipated that that portion of the colony which we propose now to give this increased representation to would ever, in our time, have reached its present condition; in fact, I might say that, as far as I am concerned, I never anticipated that that part of the country would ever require to be represented specially in the Legislature of the country. But all this has come to pass, and the principal object of this Bill is to give increased representation to that part of the colony which, only a very short time ago, was altogether unoccupied and unutilised, and considered to be unfruitful. This Bill proposes to give six members to what is at the present

time the Yilgarn electorate, which is represented by my friend the hon. member for Yilgarn. It also proposes to give four members to the Murchison goldfields, which are now represented by the hon. member for Nannine. Hon. members will have noticed, by looking at the Bill, and also at the map which is before us, that the Yilgarn, Coolgardie, and Dundas goldfields will, in future, have six members instead of one, and that the Murchison goldfields will have four members instead of one. That provides for eight members out of the ten additional members proposed in the Bill. It will be noticed that the two sides of what are at present the Perth electorates are to be constructed each into an electorate under this Bill—one to the eastward, and the other to the westward of the municipality. One of these electorates, that to the eastward, is to be named the "Canning" electorate; and the other, that to the westward, is to be named the "North Perth" electorate.

MR. SIMPSON: None for Fremantle?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That name will have to be changed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think the question of the name is a very important one; and, at any rate, it can be dealt with when we get into committee. If hon. members think that "North Perth" is not such a pretty name as "North Fremantle," we will be glad to consider the adoption of the latter name. Hon. members will notice that East Perth, which formerly took in all the Canning, is now contracted into that part of the Municipality of Perth eastward of Beaufort Street, and bounded by the river. The Canning electorate is made up of part of the present Swan electorate, and also part of the South Fremantle electorate, the northern boundary being the Helena River, and the southern boundary being the north boundary of Cockburn Sound Location 16 to Mt. Dale; while on the western side it is bounded by the Swan River from the Helena River southward down to the Canning Bridge and up to Bull's Creek, and then some distance further southward. This will make a convenient electorate, and it will include a good many people.

MR. SIMPSON: We have got a man ready for it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This electorate has a considerable rural population occupying country extending from Jandakot to the Helena River, along the banks of the Swan, and again to Mt. Dale. Then it includes the Canning Mills, and all the people engaged in timber cutting along the Darling Range. The North Perth electorate will extend from the boundary of North Fremantle town-site away to what is known as Waneroo. I do not know exactly where Waneroo is—I am not sure of its exact locality, and I do not think it has ever been ascertained—but it is the general name for the district comprised by the lakes north of Perth. A good deal of produce comes from that district, and many people are settled there. This electorate also includes Leederville, Subiaco, Claremont, Cottesloe, Buckland Hill, and in fact all the places west of Perth. It is a populous electorate, with a large number of people living in it, and I think in the re-distribution we have acted wisely in giving it representation in Parliament. As I have just said, the South Fremantle electorate will be contracted in area, having that portion known as Jandakot taken from it, and this portion will form a portion of the Canning electorate. In regard to the new Yalgoo electorate, it is proposed to include in it, as nearly as we can, the whole of the Yalgoo goldfield. That portion of the goldfield which is, under existing circumstances, included in the Murchison electoral district, has been taken out of the Murchison; and, in order to make up for what is taken out, we propose to contract the Geraldton electoral district by adding Northampton and other places in that farming district to the Murchison electoral district. We will then have a very compact electorate, one fairly well populated, including Northampton, Port Gregory, and north of the Murchison, extending eastward as far as Mount Hale in the Upper Murchison, and on the south by the boundary of the new electorate of Yalgoo. That is an electorate which I think will be satisfactory to everyone, and particularly to the people of Geraldton and Northampton, and of the country away to the Murchison. Hon. members will be interested, in looking through this Bill, to see that the Government have not taken the population, in this or other cases, as

the basis of the distribution of seats. [MR. RANDELL: Partly, I suppose.] We have not taken population as the basis of the different electorates, although we have been influenced, especially in the towns, by the number of the population in those towns; and I may say that, especially in the larger towns of the colony, it is impossible to overlook the question of population. We have to consider, to a large extent, the interests of the people as a whole, and are not able altogether to deal with the question of representation on the basis of population; but when we come to such towns as Fremantle and Perth, we are bound, to a very large extent, to consider the question of population—not in giving them representation on the basis of population, but in regard to giving them such representation as may, between the two towns, be considered reasonable and fair. It may be said by the people of Fremantle—and I am going to address the members for Fremantle, who I think have a little feeling on the subject—that Fremantle should have another member; but I say that if you give another member to Fremantle, I do not see how you can refuse to give another member to Perth. [MR. SIMPSON: Give them another. I have no objection.] The hon. member for Geraldton is not in charge of this Bill, and is not responsible for it. When he is responsible, he can propose to give a hundred more members if he likes. But at present I am in charge of the Bill before the House. Perth has three members at present; and I think the population is much greater for those three members than the population of Fremantle is for the three members given to it. Therefore if you are going to disturb the representation of Fremantle, you must do the same for Perth. For my own part, I see no reason whatever for giving to Fremantle more than three members, and I believe the people are perfectly satisfied with three members. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Especially as they are such good ones.] Yes; especially when they are such good ones. Unless the representatives of Fremantle wish to give more members to Perth, I cannot see how they can ask for more members for Fremantle. I can well understand hon. members, representing constituencies, wishing to get as much representation for the places they repre-

sent as possible; that is but reasonable, and I sympathise with them; but, if the hon. members for Perth and Fremantle think it over, they will come to the conclusion that the Government have done their best to try and act equitably to all parts of the colony. It is not desirable, at the present time, to have too big a House. I am altogether adverse to having too small a House; but, in this colony, with a population of 123,000, including women and children, it seems to me 43 members are a very fair sized House for the population. I can only assure every hon. member in this House that the Government have approached this question without any idea of being influenced by any other consideration than what is best generally for the colony. We have not been influenced in the slightest possible degree by any party consideration. [MR. GEORGE: There is no party.] I may say I have approached the question—and I have had a good deal to do with this matter—with a desire not to increase the House too much. A small House is very troublesome, of course, sometimes; but I do not think we want to increase this House too much, under existing circumstances. We want to give people fair representation, but not too much of it, because there will be demands later on, as we progress. I hope, at any rate, there will be, and I think 43 members for this House will be a fairly large enough number. As to the boundaries of the electorates, that is a matter on which every hon. member may form an opinion for himself, and every opportunity will be given for discussion, not only in the House, but, if any one desires it, the Government will not object to refer the question of boundaries to a select committee, as we have done hitherto. The question as to what the boundaries of the various electorates shall be has generally been referred to a select committee, in order that these details may be discussed and reported upon for the information of the House; and the Government have no objection to that course being pursued on this occasion. The boundaries we have given in the Bill are those we think best and most equitable, but I am sure we have not formed so fixed an opinion that we shall not be open to argument, and probably some hon. members, knowing perhaps more of the

localities, may be able to suggest alterations which may be an improvement to the boundaries proposed by the Government. I may point out, in regard to the representation given to the goldfields, that I am not sanguine enough to hope the representation here proposed will meet with the approval of everyone, or even of all the people on the goldfields. I hope it may, but of course it is difficult to please everybody, even if one tries one's best. I may point out that, taking the aggregate of the representation given in this Bill for the goldfields, the number of members will not be far from the mark, even on the basis of population; because, out of 43 seats which we propose in this Bill, 11 of them will be for goldfields constituencies, and therefore the goldfields will have a little more than one quarter of the whole number of 43 members in this House. I hope the people on the goldfields who have been so desirous of having increased representation, and who have expressed their wishes on many occasions, will concede that the Government have tried to act equitably and liberally in dealing with this matter. It will be noticed that the Government propose to have another Minister, making six principal executive offices of the Government. In proposing this increase, I think the Government are only carrying out the wish, expressed so often, that, considering the conditions existing in the colony and the amount of labour entailed on Ministers in managing our affairs at the present time, some of the members of the Government have more departments and offices to look after than they can properly attend to; and considering that the expense of an extra Minister is not very great, and considering the growing condition of our departments, and the amount of care and work connected with them, I think we will not be acting unwisely in adding another principal executive office, as proposed in the Bill. As members will notice, it is proposed also to create another province for representation in the Upper House, thus giving three more members to that House. This new province will include six electorates to the Eastward, on the Yilgarn and Coolgardie goldfields. These six electorates are Yilgarn and Dundas and the four Coolgardies, and these it is proposed to constitute into a province, and

to give them the right to return three members to the Upper House. That will very largely contract the area of the present East Province, but a provision is made in the Bill that those members who represent the East Province shall continue to represent it until the effluxion of time. The question of giving increased representation in the Upper House to the Murchison Goldfields has not been lost sight of by the Government—in fact, we gave it careful consideration; but, considering all things, the Government came to the conclusion that at the present time it was not necessary to give three members in the Upper House to the Murchison Goldfields as well as to the Coolgardie Goldfields. Hon. members will express themselves no doubt on that point; but it seemed to the Government that, under existing circumstances, the Murchison Goldfields might well wait a little while before obtaining separate representation in the Upper House. We desire to give to those goldfields the fullest representation in the Lower House, but we hesitate about adding three more members to the Upper House, for giving separate representation to the Murchison Goldfields at present. There is provision for the retirement of members of the Upper House, so that members going out by effluxion of time will retire on a certain fixed date, and in each case the new member will be able to be elected before that date, and take his seat just after the retiring member vacates the seat. That will provide for members of the Upper House being continuous, and that no lapse of time shall take place between the retirement of one member and the new member taking the seat in succession. Hon. members will notice, from the observations I have made, that there are difficulties in the way of this Bill being at once assented to, and a general election taking place immediately. My friend, the Attorney-General, is of opinion, and has advised, that this Bill for altering the electoral districts and other things will require the royal assent, and that the Governor in this colony is not empowered, constitutionally, to assent to it for bringing it into operation at once. The necessity for referring the Bill to London for Her Majesty's assent will cause delay, of course, as some time must elapse in sending the Bill to England.

These difficulties I hope may be got over in time by Imperial legislation for altering the procedure; but at present we have to conform to the constitutional law. The Government will try to expedite matters; and after the Bill is assented to the Act will be proclaimed at the earliest possible moment. But, even with all the expedition that can be used, it seems to me that some time must elapse before the Bill can be proclaimed in the colony and become law. That procedure will of course delay a general election for some time. The present Parliament will continue to exist until the dissolution; and if anything should happen requiring the convening of Parliament, of course Parliament can be convened at any time for any purpose; but, looking all round the subject and seeing the distance and the time that must elapse before this Bill can receive the royal assent, I do not see how it can be possible for the dissolution of Parliament to take place till early in next year, and for the general elections to take place earlier than April or May. Hon. members will know, though it is not stated in this Bill, that the provisions of this Bill, and the alterations that will take place under it, mean that there will be a dissolution of Parliament after this session, and the term for which hon. members are elected—that is for four years—will have to be curtailed by about 12 months. That is a matter which I think cannot be avoided. Of course under ordinary circumstances, unless there is some good reason to the contrary, a member elected for a constituency may look forward, as a general rule, to serving the full term for which he is elected; and if it could have been arranged that members should continue to sit through the full term for which they have been elected, of course the Government would have framed the Bill accordingly; but under existing circumstances, and looking all round the question, I think no one in this House or in the colony will be found to regret that a dissolution of Parliament will have to take place early in the next year. Things have so changed that, owing to the influx of population, and the developments that have taken place since the time we were elected, only a little over two years ago, the difference is simply marvellous; and although I maintain that we as a House have all the rights and privileges to

which we were elected, and are quite competent to carry on the affairs of this colony, and deal with any matter, however important, yet I think that none of us will regret that we have to go back to our constituents a little earlier than we expected, especially when it is for the object provided in this Bill, that of giving increased representation to a large portion of the colony not sufficiently represented at present. For myself, and for the other members of the Ministry, I may say we rejoice to have the opportunity of going before the people of this country and before our constituents early next year. We are prepared to go before the country to-morrow, if we could have the opportunity; and we are ready to abide by the verdict of the country loyally, whatever that verdict may be. As I explained the other night, in speaking on the Address-in-Reply, it seemed impossible to me that this Parliament could be dissolved until this Bill is assented to in due course; because, to dissolve before this Bill becomes law would not be carrying out the object everyone has in view. When we meet again, we want to have this House representative of the various new constituencies constituted under this Act, and that will not be the case if a dissolution takes place in the present year. Besides that, it would be very inconvenient for the public business of the colony that any dissolution should take place until after these electorates we are providing for are represented in this House. At the present time it would be inconvenient that very important public business which we have to discuss and deal with should be interfered with in any way, by any political consideration of that kind. I think it is a matter for congratulation that our position has so improved as to make an increase of members necessary. As I said before, I do not believe there is anyone in this House who will regret, when he comes to consider and reason with others, that the life of this Parliament should be curtailed, because it means that we are progressing at such a rate that we have to admit into our family—the legislature of the colony—a large number of new members, representing important interests which were not in existence at the time we were elected. What will give members of the House still more satisfaction is to know

that the colony seems to progress by leaps and bounds; and, as far as I am able to judge, it seems to me we are only at the beginning of what is in store for us. As I view, day after day, week after week, and month after month, the revenue returns coming in, I often feel that these returns are so great that I doubt whether in the next year, when I come to compare its return for a month with the month of the previous year, the figures will show so large an increase. But, still I see, as month after month goes on, that the increases are certainly not diminishing in ratio, but increasing. Only to-day I have had before me the revenue return for the present month, and I find that up to the date—I think the 25th July—the revenue was £173,000, as compared with £94,000 for the corresponding month of last year, or about £80,000 more for this month than it was for the month of July last year. Our railway traffic is increasing to such an extent that, though we are importing new trucks and engines, and doing everything we can to try and keep pace with the trade, still the trade seems to be running almost a dead heat with us; for notwithstanding all our endeavours to increase the rolling stock, the trade seems to increase at such a rate that we are scarcely able at the present time, or, I may say, not able, to cope with the increase. I hope, however, that we shall soon be able to do so. I am told that the direct shipping from England alone at the present time is enormous, and that there are 16,000 tons of goods lying in Fremantle harbour to-day, from England, and 14,000 tons to arrive in a few days. Hon. members will see to what enormous extent the progress of the colony has attained. This is not including the intercolonial shipping, of which I have not the figures. This state of things compares strikingly with that of a few years ago—I may say almost a short time ago—when there was about one ship in a month from the old country, and with only a very small amount of cargo. I think hon. members will agree with me that, notwithstanding some difficulties which arise here and there, the people of the colony are doing well, and are fairly satisfied. I am sure the present Government are very pleased indeed to have the opportunity of introducing to hon. members this measure,

giving so much increased representation to those new districts, where the people of the goldfields have done so much and will do much more to build up the prosperity of the colony. This is but the successor of the measure we introduced a short time ago. We gave then the franchise, which, notwithstanding what anyone may say, is a liberal franchise; for, under it, any man who has been 12 months in the colony, and six months resident in one district, may obtain the franchise, and may vote without any other qualification whatever for representation in Parliament. We have given that to every man in the colony, from one end to the other, without any distinction; and we desire now to give them the representation to which they are fairly entitled, as provided in this Bill. I can only hope, in conclusion, that those persons to whom we have given the franchise on the goldfields—and we have given the same franchise to everyone else—and to whom now the privilege of sending representatives to this Parliament is given, will value the privilege, as I believe they will, and that they will use it only in promoting the best interests of the colony. I have no doubt myself they will value it, and exercise it in a way creditable to themselves. I have always said—and I say it again—that I believe the people of the country have sufficient good sense to look after their own interests; and that although they may wander away a little, now and again, from what others may consider the right path, still, in the end, they will be patriotic and wise enough to do that which will be in the interests of themselves and the colony. I can only again express the hope that the goldfields of the colony will return members to this House who will not only be useful representatives, but do credit to the goldfields, and also do honour to the colony. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

At 6:30 p.m. the Speaker left the chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the Speaker resumed the chair.

MR. SOLOMON: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I must congratulate the Government on having brought it forward at the urgent wish of

the whole colony; and I feel sure the redistribution of seats which is proposed in the Bill will meet with a great amount of satisfaction. At the same time I must state that, so far as Fremantle is concerned, I think it has not been dealt with in as fair a manner as it might be. Some ten or twelve years ago Fremantle was represented by just as many members as represent it now, and from what the Premier said to-day, in regard to the immense progress which the colony has made as justifying this increase of representation in Parliament, it would appear that the progress means only that other parts of the colony have progressed, leaving Fremantle out altogether; because if the other parts of the colony, more especially Perth, which is so near to Fremantle, have progressed so as to require additional representation in this House, surely Fremantle also, as the main port of the colony, has progressed proportionately. I trust, therefore, that when we come to consider the details in committee, the Government and the House will see that Fremantle is reasonably entitled to another representative. What I would like to point out is this, that with regard to North Fremantle of late years there has been a vast increase in population. Large blocks of land have been purchased from the Government near Buckland Hill and other places, which have been cut up and sold to those who invest in small allotments; and that part of the district has progressed. I will not say out of proportion, but I believe Fremantle altogether has progressed in proportion to Perth and to the rest of the colony. I therefore think that, in this redistribution of seats, Fremantle should have its fair share, and an additional representative. It has always been said, when referring to the harbour works at Fremantle, that they will be a boon to Fremantle, and must enhance the importance and prestige of that port. Consequently we are justified in expecting, as a result of these important public works, that within a year or so we shall have vessels coming into the river. That development in the port of Fremantle is one great reason why we may suppose that, in a short time, there will be far greater progress made than has been made in recent years. I may also say, with regard to the municipality

of Fremantle, that at present between the north boundary of the central division and the south boundary of the river, there are some 600 voters on the municipal roll, and these are comprised in only one part of the present North Fremantle district. Of course 600 voters on the municipal roll would be equal to something like 900 voters on the Parliamentary roll. Then, as to the north side of the river, it is the intention of the members for Fremantle to ask the Government to consider that the north side is entitled to a separate member, and to suggest that the district now called North Fremantle, or a part of it, should be called East Fremantle. Dealing now with the north boundary, I suppose the population of that portion, from the north boundary to the river, must comprise at least four or five hundred people, and, besides the settlers, large investments have taken place in consequence of the cutting up of land between there and Cottesloe. I think, therefore, the House and the Government may well consider, in committee, that Fremantle is entitled to a separate member for that portion of the North Fremantle district. Other members connected with Fremantle will be able to place their views before the House, and I do trust that the Government and the House will, in justice to Fremantle, consider that, as being the main port of the colony and equally progressing with other parts of the colony, we are entitled to another member.

MR. HIGHAM: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I have to congratulate this House on the position of the colony, which requires such a large accession of representation. At the same time, and without begging the question, I have to express my disappointment, as one of the members for Fremantle, at the scant courtesy shown to it in framing the redistribution of seats. The position of Fremantle warrants another member, more especially as the present North Fremantle electorate has many divergent interests which render it desirable that the district should be divided. I do not propose to labour this question at the present time, but when this Bill goes into committee, I and other members of this House will propose an amendment to the effect that the North Fremantle Municipality shall become a

separate electorate, and return its own member. To make it sufficiently large to warrant that course, we propose that a section of Buckland Hill, Cottesloe Beach, and Cottesloe shall be added to the electoral district. The electors in that district will then be numerically much stronger than the majority of electorates in the colony. So far as the town of Fremantle proper is concerned, we would urge that a new electorate be made there—term it what you like, but we suggest that it be called “East Fremantle.” There is an immense population there. I believe that, at the present time, within the municipal area, there are 600 voters on the roll, and they would represent fully 1,200 on the Legislative roll. Outside the municipal boundary, there is also a very large population in the suburban portion, particularly at Plympton, Richmond, and beyond. There is also a fairly large rural population in that district. We hope, therefore, that the members of this House will view this question liberally, and grant to Fremantle that consideration which we believe it deserves. The division between North and East Fremantle is desirable for this reason, that North Fremantle is gradually accumulating interests of her own, and, to a certain extent, they are divergent from those across the river.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The water question separates them, I suppose?

MR. HIGHAM: Possibly it does. I hope that when we go into committee, hon. members will see their way to fall in with our proposal.

MR. RANDELL: This Bill bears on the face of it evidence that a considerable amount of attention has been given by the Government to the preparation of it, and, as I hear one hon. member say, it may be termed a very good Bill. I think most members of this House will agree with that sentiment. There is sufficient evidence to show, too, that the Government have had a desire to meet and to provide for all the interests there are in the colony. It is quite right that this Bill should be introduced in this early part of the session, so as to set at rest the minds of a large number of people in the colony in reference to this question, and especially a large number on the goldfields, who have been asking for and

expecting that an increase of representation in this House would be conceded to them. I think they have been justified in that expectation. The Government have made a very fair and liberal provision for the wants of the goldfields, and, at the same time, have taken into consideration the varied interests of the colony in constituting one or two new districts, which I look upon as being very valuable additions, because of the interests they represent. Taking the Bill as a whole, there is every reason to think that the Government have endeavoured to fairly provide for the representation of every part of the colony, and that the new Assembly to be constituted under the Bill will be fairly representative of the whole of the colony. At the same time, I think that Fremantle has a right to put forward the case which has been stated by its members. I have always held, from the first time the question arose, that the number of representatives of the colony should be increased, and that a re-adjustment of the constituencies should take place. I have always considered that Fremantle would be justly entitled in such case to have one additional member; and if we look at the new constituencies of the Canning and North Perth, as the latter is called in the Bill—for which I hope a more appropriate name will be provided, because that name does not fairly express the position of that constituency, and I think "North-West Perth" perhaps might do it better, or, as suggested by the Premier, "Karrakatta" might meet the difficulty; indeed, the name "North Perth" would be a misnomer—but these two constituencies, the Canning and North Perth, though they have interests which are not represented by East and West Perth, may yet be regarded, practically, as Perth constituencies; whereas the new constituency which is to be called North Fremantle cannot, in the same degree, be regarded as a Fremantle constituency. A new constituency such as is suggested by the members for Fremantle, to be formed on the north side of the river, might properly be called "North Fremantle." That constituency would make a valuable addition, because its interests are somewhat divergent from those of the other portions of Fremantle.

At any rate, the people there may be expected to look at some questions from a different standpoint as compared with people on the other side of the river. It is a district that is bound to become populous in the near future. Most of the land has been purchased from the Government, and is in the hands of private individuals; houses are springing up in all directions outside of Fremantle and up to Cottesloe; and it would not be difficult to select a boundary line between it and the North Perth constituency, so called. If the Government can see their way to do this, I shall give my hearty support to what the members for Fremantle have suggested, and to which I think they are justly entitled. The new constituency of the Canning, although it embraces Jandakot, Rockingham, Victoria Park, and Kelmscott, may be looked upon more in the light of a Perth constituency, than the new district of North Fremantle can be regarded as a Fremantle constituency. Certainly the new constituency of North Perth, as proposed in this Bill, will be essentially a Perth constituency, because the places comprised in it are suburbs of the city; particularly Leederville, Subiaco, Claremont, and one place (Waneroo), the exact location of which the Premier stated he did not know, although I think he meant that he did not know the boundaries. At any rate, we know that district is an energetic, enterprising, and progressive part of the colony. We all know that Claremont, Subiaco, and Leederville are progressing at a very rapid rate; that population is increasing, and that Leederville is already constituted a municipality, so that we may expect Subiaco will soon become a municipality, and Claremont also in the near future. I do not think I need remark upon any other portion of the Bill, further than to say that I feel the country is indebted for the careful consideration which the Ministry have given to the preparation of this Bill, which appears to me an exceedingly fair one in the arrangement of its boundaries, and takes into account all the varied interests of the colony. It is to be deprecated that any particular interest should dominate this House, so as to carry its points here to the detriment, possibly, of other parts of the colony. By basing the Bill partly on population, and partly on the

varied interests of the colony, the Government have proposed an arrangement which will commend itself to every unbiassed and fair mind. I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading, reserving to myself, of course, the right to criticise any of its details in committee. With regard to the boundaries, I am unable to say very much about them. I have no doubt they have had the very careful consideration of the Government, aided with the special knowledge they have at their command; and the Government have thus been able to arrive at a fair division all round. I am glad to see they have recognised the interests of the gold mining community, and have conceded to them what I think is a fair amount of representation in this House.

MR. MOSS: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I cordially endorse the remarks that have fallen from my colleagues respecting the representation of Fremantle, supported as they are by the hon. member for Perth; and I thank him exceedingly for the favourable remarks he has made upon the claim put forward on behalf of Fremantle. I am sure any suggestion made by him in this House will have considerable weight with the Government and the House; therefore the course he has now taken will strengthen the case which has been made out by my colleagues—that is, the case for additional representation of the Fremantle district. I do not suppose any hon. member will deny that since 1889, when the Constitution Act was passed bringing in responsible government, the district of Fremantle has made very considerable progress, or that Fremantle is now entitled to a greater representation than it was when three members were allotted to it under the former Act. When we look at Perth, we find that the Government are proposing practically to give to it two additional representatives. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) admits that the new district of the Canning and the new district of North Perth will probably be represented by Perth men. The one district includes a portion of the present district of West Perth, and the new district of the Canning includes a portion of the present district of East Perth; so that it seems to me the representatives of

these districts would, in all probability, be Perth men. Therefore, it is only fair that the Government should take into consideration the claim which has been brought under their notice by my two colleagues, and which has been endorsed by the hon. member for Perth. I would like the Government to notice the fact, that during the last 3 or 4 years there has been growing up a district round about Fremantle known as the district of Plympton and Richmond, and that in this district there are probably 800 to 1,000 persons now residing, who were not there when the former Constitution Act was passed giving three members to Fremantle; and not only has there been a large growth there, but in all parts of the Fremantle districts there has been a considerable accession of population. Therefore when the argument is put forward that the three districts of Perth are entitled to an additional representative, that argument applies with equal force to the district of Fremantle. The claim which we put forward on behalf of Fremantle is not that we should be placed on the same footing as Perth, but that we shall be placed on a better footing than we were put on in 1889. We are only asking for an extension of the boundary of North Fremantle, and that a division be made somewhere near Cottesloe, so as to give one representative for a district that is very badly divided from other portions of that constituency. It includes the municipality of North Fremantle, and extends down to Fremantle proper, comprising nearly one half of the town. The suggestion thrown out by the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) for making one constituency on the north side of the river, then dividing the remaining portion of the Fremantle constituency, and making another constituency to be called "East Fremantle," would be a reasonable and satisfactory solution of the difficulty. I would like to refer the Premier to the remarks made by the late member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) last session, when the hon. member for Nannine tabled his motion affirming that the Government should provide for increased representation. On that occasion Mr. Marmion suggested that, when that came about, he would be prepared to support it; and, no doubt, had he been alive at

the present time, he would not have been backward in pressing his views on the Government. He said the Government should, in any redistribution of seats, provide an additional representative for Fremantle. I bring these remarks of our late representative before the Premier's notice now, because his late friend was not backward in pressing that view on the Government, when he had the opportunity of doing so; and I hope the Premier, who has expressed his sympathy with North Fremantle on this occasion, will show that he is really sympathetic in the matter. If he considers that we are able to make out a strong case, as I submit we do, I hope he will not be backward in recognising the suggestion that has been made to him, and in giving it effect in the Bill. The hon. member for Perth, in expressing his opinion in favour of this claim, has probably done so not from the same point of view as the member for Fremantle might be expected to take. We may be accused of being actuated by prejudice, and that we are desirous of giving increased representation to the Fremantle district for the purpose of strengthening our position as representatives; but I say that remark cannot apply to our friend the member for Perth, who has told the Government, pretty plainly, that he considers Fremantle has a strong claim for an additional representative. I think that, under the circumstances, the Government will be acting wisely by giving effect to the claim put forward by the members for Fremantle, supported as it is by the hon. member for Perth. With that exception, I think the Government are to be congratulated on the Bill they have submitted to this House; and, with that exception, it seems to me that the Bill meets with universal approval. I hope the Government will be able to give Fremantle what we ask for, so that the Fremantle representatives may be able to concur unanimously in this Bill, and that it will go forth as a measure representing the unanimous approval of this Chamber.

MR. MORAN: I think I have greater reason, on behalf of my constituents, to congratulate the Government on bringing in this Bill, than any other member of this House. Yilgarn has grown into a most important electorate. I have no

doubt that the hon. member for Toodyay remembers the time when, as member for that district, he scarcely gave a single thought, other than in relation to agriculture, to the electorate of Yilgarn. It is only two years since, by the kindness of this House, the whole of the Eastern goldfields were privileged to have a member, and if the constituency made a mistake then, it is a good job they will have an opportunity of undoing it in a short time. I listened with some interest to the remarks of the members for Fremantle in reference to giving four members to that one port; but it cannot altogether be said that the divergence of interests is very great in any one portion of Fremantle as compared with another part. If there is some divergence there, might I not, with much greater force, say that in the town of Coolgardie and district, where there are at least 10,000 people, and these are principally male adults, who are large taxpayers, and therefore large contributors to the revenue of the colony—might I not say, with a certain amount of justice, that if Fremantle is entitled to four members on the score of population and diversity of interests, then Coolgardie would at least be entitled to a member for the town which, owing to its large and important interests, may be looked upon at the present time as the third or fourth town in Western Australia? Might I not, also, with equal justice, ask for a member to represent the town of Kalgoorlie and its district? These two large and important towns contain a great deal of wealth, and their populations are, as I said, made up of male adults, and not of women and children, so that these men will be entitled to a vote if they choose to exercise it. I do not say, however, that I shall not support the request of Fremantle for another member—as a matter of fact I shall support their claim—and I take this opportunity of stating that the members for the metropolitan and Fremantle constituencies have been noted, throughout the existence of the goldfields, for their generous support of all measures which have tended to benefit the electorates which I and the member for Nannine represent; and it will, therefore, be only just that, if I am returned again to this House, I should give my support to those

who are liberally inclined to help the goldfields' population in their efforts to help themselves, and, in doing so, to benefit the colony generally. Coming now to my own electorate, which, from one representative, is to be increased to six, I may say those six representatives in this House will be men of some influence; and I may add that some portion of the Press in that electorate will not be satisfied with the amount of representation that is given in this Bill. I do not say that, did I think this House would be so disposed, I would not endeavour to get a member each for Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, in addition to the representation that is to be given to the district; but I do not wish to be unreasonable, nor to create a great amount of discussion about the matter, because, as far as I am personally concerned, and as my own judgment goes, I say we shall have, in this House, eleven members whose interests, and the interests of whose constituents, will be one and the same identically. The six members who will be elected for the present Yilgarn district, and the four who will be elected for the Murchison, together with the member for Pilbarra and the member for East Kimberley, who is practically a goldfields member, will give a party of one dozen members representing goldfields interests. A dozen men, in an Assembly of 43, may become a very great power; and, if they are reasonable men, as we hope they will be, for we have sufficient faith, and we know the goldfields people sufficiently to think they will return men of reason to this House, they will be elected from a body composed of some of the finest of Australia's sons, the pick of many of the colonies; and I feel certain the electors will, in their wisdom, select candidates who will not be backward in asking justice for their own constituencies; still, if they are reasonable men, they will, at the same time, take a patriotic and liberal view of the questions that may come before this House. I do not think the new members who may be elected for the goldfields will use their positions unduly for the benefit of their particular district, but will not neglect nor refuse to give assistance to the other parts of the colony. Instead of doing worse than they have done in the past, I feel certain that, when the next elections come on, the goldfields

constituencies will certainly improve their representation in this House. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that both the present members for the goldfields will have the pleasure of sitting in the Speaker's gallery and listening to other representatives from the goldfields fighting the battle of interests as we, the present members, have fought it in the past, on the floor of this House. Another part of this Bill which I have great pleasure in supporting is the last clause, making provision for a sixth Minister. I am not expressing this pleasure because I hope to be one of the Ministers—no; that is beyond the bounds of probability—but because the appointment of another Minister is really necessary, judging from the tremendous amount of dissatisfaction existing in connection with the Postal Department. No one has heard me grumble before, although the press has been full of these grievances. I know more of the *laches* of that department of the Government service than perhaps any other member. I know there have been tens of thousands of pounds lost through the disorganisation and bad condition of the postal and telegraphic services in this colony. The two most important departments, as far as our goldfields interests are concerned, are the Post and Telegraphs and the Mines Departments; and that they should be run under one Minister is unfair, and must lead to dissatisfaction. It is not only unfair to the country, but thoroughly unfair to the Minister at the head of these departments. Even in the backward countries of South America (from which countries there are at present many engineers and others in this colony) I am told that, compared with the system in this colony, South America is a paradise to live in, so far as the postal and telegraphic services are concerned. I know of one instance in which £20,000 was lost to one of the largest bodies of capitalists represented in this colony—I refer to the firm represented by Mr. Morgan—through a cablegram being kept over nine days before the department sent it on to England. The Postmaster General has all the correspondence referring to that delayed cable. While such losses occur in that department, and while such dissatisfaction exists, I am led to believe also that the Mines Department is not giving that

satisfaction which the public might expect. We know one great reason is that indefinite and obnoxious Clause 11 in the Goldfields Act. If we are to have an additional Minister, these large departments can be apportioned in a manner which will give greater satisfaction to the country and to this House, and do more justice to the head of each department. Can it be said, with justice, that the present Minister of Works and Railways has a fair share of work to perform? Is it not a fact that he has as much as any two Ministers put together? Is it not a fact that we have a large scheme for supplying water to the goldfields, which should be sufficient for the attention of one Minister alone? Two years ago, when Coolgardie was a neglected and almost unknown district, I brought forward a proposition affirming that there should be a water supply department for the goldfields entirely distinct from the Works Department. I hope the Government, in the re-arrangement of portfolios, will so arrange that we shall have a hydraulic department separate from that which is ruled over by the Engineer-in-Chief, and to be under the direction of an officer of high ability, almost equal to that of Mr. O'Connor. I can tell the Government that any member of this House, when he goes before the constituencies, will be asked questions concerning the terrible condition of the postal and telegraphic services; that each member seeking re-election will be asked what is his opinion about the postal and telegraph services; and if he be not inclined to urge on a most searching inquiry, and a complete change of system in that department, he will have no possible chance of voicing the feelings of electors by being returned to this House. Not only in Perth and Fremantle, as business centres, but throughout the goldfields and among business people in all parts of the colony, there is strong dissatisfaction with the working of the postal and telegraphic services; and if the general election takes place before a complete change is made, I think the dissatisfaction will take the form of public manifestations against the Government, or at least against those supporters of the Government who may be inclined to back up the present state of officialdom instead of pushing things on

quicker. I come now to a question which is perhaps the most unpopular and the most obnoxious one, so far as this House is concerned; that is the payment of members of Parliament. I hear exclamations of "oh, oh;" but I intend that, before this House shall dissolve, those members who used this election cry as a plank for getting elected to this House—and there are many of them in this House at present, myself among the number—members who seem afraid to mention the matter in this House for fear the finger of scorn should be pointed at them, shall have an opportunity of declaring themselves here, for I will divide the House on the question.

MR. A. FORREST: You will be by yourself. You can't have a division with only one.

MR. MORAN: There shall be a division, and a minority of one then.

THE PREMIER: You can't get it in that way.

MR. MORAN: But I think you will not find a minority of one. I fancy you will find a very close division on this question. I deem it a proper thing for any member, when once elected on a pledge to support the payment of members, that he should stick to his colours; and, be the matter ever so unpopular, he should at least fulfil the main pledges he has given to his constituents. After all, are we so high and mighty, and so much above every other British community in the world, that we must hold ourselves aloof and say we will not take the £300 a year as members of Parliament, though a member might be taking £3,000 a year in some other way? We know that in the other colonies this was a very unpopular cry for a long time with a certain class, but every one of those colonies has at length adopted the payment of members, and we do not find that wrong and destruction have followed as a consequence. On the contrary, we know that before the principle of payment was adopted, and before the much-decried labour party had a voice in the Parliaments, it was then that those colonies were plunged into debt. South Australia, the most democratic colony in the group, headed by the most democratic Premier—indeed, with all due deference to our own Premier, I think Mr. Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, is not a less able or less popular states-

man—has adopted the payment of members, and is influenced largely by a labour party. If a plebiscite on the question could be taken in this colony, of every voter independently of electorates, I venture to express the opinion that a two-thirds majority would voice the opinion of the people in favour of this much-derided payment of members. [THE PREMIER: Who derides it?] I know it is derided in this House. I wish to show that I do not introduce the proposal in any personal way whatever. The amount of the payment—£250 or £300 a year—would not weigh with any man who has the brains to make a living. If every member of this House had to go through as much expense as I have, in representing the Yilgarn constituency, they would realise how expensive it is to represent a large and distant constituency like that. It is an easy matter to send telegrams, but it is a far different matter to bear all the expenses of canvassing and travelling, and of frequently visiting a far-off electorate, if a member does his duty well. A member representing the new North Coolgardie electorate, for instance, will have to visit it often. I have gone over the fields seven or eight times, and if I had not done all this expensive travelling I should not be in a position to tell this House the condition of those fields. There may be good men chosen in the future who may not have the means of doing that; and I think it is no fault in a man who desires to get into Parliament that he is not financially able to devote £700 or £800 a year for the good of his country, and travelling expenses also. It is not too much to expect that if a man is conscientious and does his duty well, and enjoys the confidence of his electors, the country should give him some return for his services in the shape of a payment to cover his expenses. Even if this proposal be passed, it may not be my lot to draw a salary; but when every British community in the world has adopted the payment of members, except ourselves, why should we shirk it? [THE PREMIER: Not in Great Britain.] Then this is the only British country in the world that can be placed on a level with the old country, in that respect. But as an Australian, with all due deference to the old country, I prefer to follow the precedents and prac-

tice of my own country. The conditions of life here are very different, as compared with a country which has a large leisured class; and the expense of travelling long distances is much greater in Australia. A member who does his duty well by his constituents must go about and see the wants and requirements for himself. He must not go once a year, but if possible three or four times a year, because on the goldfields the conditions of life change so rapidly. In conclusion, I return my most sincere thanks to the Government for having given what I consider a very fair dole to our goldfields electorates, and to my constituency generally; although, if I chose to be captious, I might point out that my electorate comprises over 30,000 people, and it gets only six members, whereas the electorate represented by my friend, the member for Nannine, which has only a fourth of that number, gets four members under this Bill. But it is no argument that, because I do not get what I consider a full meed, others should not get it either. I do not take that position. I shall support the claim of Fremantle for another member, and I remember gratefully that the late member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) was always a generous supporter of measures for the goldfields. He also made a vigorous fight in this House against the passing of that pernicious Clause 11—even more vigorous than did the goldfields members. In view of a general election under this Bill next year, I feel certain the Premier need not fear the result of an appeal to the new constituencies, and to the greater number of electors, but that he may confidently hope to see the goldfields return members who will do credit to the country in which they have settled, and to themselves. I venture to predict you will find that, in the election of 1897, the goldfields members will be not only inclined to deal fairly by the country, but that men will be picked for election who have had plenty of experience in other parts of the world, and that they will be men who have something to lose, and by whose aid this great mining industry will be brought as near to perfection as it can be brought. I hope, also, that, as the representation of the goldfields is to be increased from two to ten, so will the produce of these goldfields be

increased in a like ratio from two to ten. With the aid of the Premier's great water scheme, and the aid of members who are to discuss it in this House, we shall be able in a few years to turn out 10 or 20 times the amount of gold that is produced at present. In proposing to increase the goldfields members and their voting power from two to ten, while the Bill will add only two new members to all other parts of the colony, this shows very clearly, as far as the Ministers are concerned, that they are not afraid of giving power in the hands of those who represent the goldfields. I am prepared to lessen the balance of power against myself by voting for one more member for Fremantle, in return for the generous support the goldfields have received in the past from the members for Fremantle. One special feature in the Bill is that there will be a great difficulty in getting men on our goldfields to register in time to vote at the general election next year. I hope some special enabling clause will be put in the Bill for giving a man a chance to vote, because many of the miners cannot well qualify by a six-months residence in one district.

MR. A. FORREST: I presume that I must follow in the wake of my hon. friend, the member for Yilgarn, and congratulate the Government on introducing this Bill. My hon. friend, while congratulating the Government upon the Bill, has a great many faults to find, but, on the whole, he is satisfied that he has got these new members. He has got them, and is satisfied, but I do not know that we are quite satisfied—that is, the other 32 members of this House; though, I suppose, we are fairly satisfied that this Bill meets the wishes of the country. I am pleased myself to find that such is the case—that the country seems fairly well satisfied with the measure. We all agree that these goldfields should be represented in Parliament, and I for one think the divisions made by the Government are fairly representative of the requirements of the particular districts. The plan of the districts has been very carefully arranged. The Government had, no doubt, the experience of the Survey Department, the officers of which know the localities well; and hon. members of the House can hardly find fault with the divisions as they have been

arranged. As to the question of the two representatives, one for the Canning and one for North Perth, a little question comes in as to whether we have quite satisfied the members for Fremantle, who may say Fremantle has not been treated quite as fairly as Perth. The district of South Fremantle, and the people living to the eastward of a very small belt of land running as far as Rockingham, are placed in the Canning electorate; and when we go to the North Perth electorate, and find that the whole of the people living at Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove, and Claremont, who belong as much to Fremantle as to Perth, have been placed in the North Perth constituency, I have a suggestion to make which I hope the Government will agree to, while I am sure the members for Fremantle will agree to it. I have to suggest that instead of giving one more member to Fremantle there should be a Canning electorate, another Perth electorate, and also an additional electorate for Fremantle. If Fremantle proper is to have four members, Perth is justified in asking the Government for more members for the districts comprised within the municipality, because there is no comparison as regards size between the municipality of Perth and the municipality of Fremantle. However, if a mutual agreement can be come to between the two sides of the House, the Government may be induced to give another electorate to Fremantle, while giving an additional member to Perth. I think this addition is only reasonable when we consider that the goldfields are to receive eight out of the ten new members, and when we remember that in the event of the goldfields not fulfilling expectations, the people in these older districts will have to bear the burden caused by the expenditure on the goldfields. Besides, we are entitled to this increased representation, seeing that Perth is the capital and Fremantle the chief port of the colony. Therefore, in committee, I will suggest that an alteration be made in the boundaries of the districts that I am speaking of. The hon. member for Yilgarn goes on to say that Clause 11, of the Goldfields Act, has given a great deal of dissatisfaction. It seems to me that all the clauses give dissatisfaction; but, as re-

gards this Clause 11, I hold a different opinion, for I think it suits very well indeed, and gives little ground for complaint. Clause 11 makes it cheaper for people to get transfers, and it also confers upon them other benefits, especially in the cases of those people who do not wish to travel to the goldfields to transact their business. The hon. member also says—I will quote the hon. member's words—that he is going to introduce into this House a measure which it is not competent for him to introduce. He desires to bring before this House a measure providing for payment of members. He suggests that in this House of 43 members, and the Upper House with 24 members, making a total of 67, each member shall receive £300 per year. This will make a total of £20,100 a year, a sum which is nearly sufficient to pay the interest on three-quarters of a million of money. If it were put fairly before the goldfields people, I should like to know whether they would spend that £20,100 a year upon the payment of members, or in paying the interest on three-quarters of a million for a water scheme. I think their reply would be, that they would certainly not spend it upon payment of members. [AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, they would.] I am quite certain that the people of the district I represent would not agree to that. I am sure that this Bill will give great satisfaction throughout this colony; and I do hope and trust that when we have given representation to this extent to the goldfields, the people there will take the trouble to get registered, and that, when registered, they will vote. The hon. member for Yilgarn complains that there are only two members in the House representing goldfields constituencies. We are altering that now; and I think it may not be a bad thing if, when this Bill is going through, we provide for a policeman being sent round to see that the people got on the register; and, in fact, care should be taken that they are put on the roll, whether they like it or not. It will be no use giving them eight new members, unless they will take the trouble to get on the roll. Personally, I take great interest in the goldfields, and I consider their claims have received great attention. There are, however, certain people who are always wanting something they can

not get, and when we give it them they say they cannot register, or that something else has to be done. I think we have now done everything that is in the power of this House, in improving the Constitution for the benefit of the goldfields, and I am glad to see that the House is unanimous on this Bill.

MR. JAMES: I hope we have not arrived at that happy stage in which people will be satisfied with all the legislation we produce. Unless the legislation we introduce is unsatisfactory to a considerable number of people, unless we have some dissatisfaction and a good deal of it, we shall have no progress. Introduced as this Bill is, primarily to meet the just demands of the goldfields, I give it a hearty welcome. It is a deserved, and I think adequate, act of justice towards the fields. Although I say that, I cannot hide from myself the fact that it seems clear some of the members of the goldfields in this House are constantly in the habit of taking up a position of isolation, and assuming that they, and they only, represent the goldfields in which all of us are interested, and for which we are all anxious to do our best. All of us, recognise, and recognise keenly and sympathetically, how much we owe to these goldfields, and how much more we shall to owe to them. Slow though we may be in Western Australia, there are very few colonies in the British empire that would take upon their shoulders responsibilities so heavy and so serious as those we have taken upon ourselves in this colony of Western Australia, for the purpose of developing the goldfields. Any ill feeling that may exist between the goldfields and the rest of the colonies can be accounted for, I think, by the fact that certain persons are under the delusion that the town called Coolgardie is the whole of the goldfields. I made only a short visit to the goldfields, and that short visit satisfied me of this fact, that I have never known of a town in my life where there was more "skite" than there is at Coolgardie—where there was more "skite" and less work done. I was keenly disappointed with what I saw of the state of affairs at Coolgardie; but when I went to Kalgoorlie I was more than agreeably surprised. I found there work being done, and not a town full of people,

more or less middlemen living upon others, and talking about what they wanted from the Government and what they did not want. There, at Kalgoorlie, they had put their shoulders to the wheel, and were doing splendid work. Too much harm is done, not only in this House but throughout the colonies, by confounding the township of Coolgardie with the goldfields themselves. I believe the goldfields people are not discontented with the Government, and I also believe they have the justice to recognise that the Government are doing all they can to assist them. Of course they are never fully satisfied that all has been done for them, and I hope that they never will be satisfied. We shall never have a Government that will satisfy all of us, but we do get tired of those people who are always clamouring for more, and are never satisfied; who accept all efforts on their behalf with an ill grace, and are always abusing those who endeavour to assist them. I shall support this Bill with great pleasure. I also support the system of payment of members. If it cannot come up for consideration with this measure, I hope the member for Yilgarn will introduce a substantive resolution on the subject, so that we may divide the House upon it. We should free our minds from the prejudices which surround this question. If we have good constituencies, I do not think that, with payment of members, they will return bad men. If bad men are returned, it is the constituency that is to blame, and not the member. I believe in giving to the electors as wide a scope for choice of candidates as possible; and, by payment of members, you give a wider choice than is given under present conditions. I think that men who devote their time to the service of the country or to any other service ought to be paid. It is a strong argument in favour of this principle, that there are hon. members in this House who oppose payment of members, and who yet will never accept a seat on a directorate unless they are paid. Nor does it seem satisfactory to say that, because in England they have not payment of members, we ought not to have it here. In many instances, we are free from the difficulties they have to contend with in England, and we ought to strike out as far as we can for ourselves, and

not reject the application of a good principle because other and older countries have not adopted it. Last session, when dealing with the Electoral Act, I suggested we should amend the Constitution in the direction of giving votes to women; but the Attorney General said it was not a question that could be dealt with under the Electoral Act. I intend, if I can possibly do it, to introduce the subject again to the consideration of this House, when this amending Bill is before us. If we are going to have a good system of Government, if we are going to secure a good foundation for the Constitution, you must give us as wide a franchise as is possible. I say, fearlessly, that the women of this colony, or any other British colony, are entitled to the exercise of the franchise. I know that I shall have the support of the Government with the exception of one member, and I hope the majority of the Government will keep their minds free from the influence of that Conservative colleague of theirs who is opposed to this reform.

THE PREMIER: Is it a Conservative measure?

MR. JAMES: I don't care whether you call it Conservative or Liberal; and I will run the risk of its being Conservative. I am satisfied that, if we give the franchise to ladies, it will be found to be a thoroughly just measure. [**MR. A. FORREST:** It is on its trial.] It may be on its trial, but I do not see why we should not give it a trial here. The majority of women are just as able to exercise a wise discretion and a sound judgment as the majority of men. [**THE PREMIER:** They do not ask for it.] I do not care for that. If ladies get on the platform and ask for the franchise, they are attacked as if they had done something wrong; and if they do not get on the platform and demand it, you say they do not ask for it, and ought not to get it. They said in South Australia, that the women did not want the franchise, but what is the result? At the recent elections the majority of the women of the colony exercised the franchise. Everywhere it was said they did not want the franchise; whereas, as soon as they got it, they seized it and made good use of it. You cannot run your head against a brick wall like that. The experience of South Australia undoubtedly is that the majority of the

women put their names on the register and voted. These are hard facts, and they are objectionable when they fall against conservative theory. I shall have great pleasure in supporting any measure that may be brought forward for giving increased representation to Fremantle. I shall endeavour, in committee, to alter somewhat the boundaries of the East Perth electorate. I do not think it advisable, if you have a constituency like the Canning, that you should have it half city and half country. If you include Victoria Park and South Perth in the Canning electorate, those districts of South Perth and Victoria Park will dominate the rest of the new constituency. I am of opinion that South Perth and Victoria Park, belonging as they do to Perth, should not be included in the Canning electorate; and, on the other hand, if it is decided that they are to remain in the new constituency, it will be much better to call the new constituency "South Perth," instead of the "Canning." You are going to include within this new constituency Jandakot and the Canning Mills, and the people of these two places will be outnumbered by the city people who reside at South Perth and Victoria Park, and whose interests are in the main hostile to the country interests. I believe in, as far as possible, keeping the town constituencies and the country constituencies apart; and for that reason I shall endeavour to have South Perth and Victoria Park cut out of the Canning electorate.

THE PREMIER: What about Waneroo?

MR. JAMES: Will you ask me to consider Waneroo? I think there are about three electors—certainly half-a-dozen at the outside—at Waneroo, and I fancy some are Chinamen, and ought not to have votes. The overwhelming majority of the electors in the Canning district will be suburban residents of Perth. I do not speak in any hostile spirit. I only say the constituencies should be either town or country constituencies. I regret that the Government have not considered a system drawn up by the Premier of South Australia, by which each constituency is to have two representatives, nominally elected for four years, each of them going out at the end of two

years. It is a good principle, and one that I should have much pleasure, as a Democrat, in supporting, as it will tend to give to the Assembly more consistency and more continuity in its work than is possible under the present system, where you have a complete change with every general election. Under the system proposed by Mr. Kingston you can have a complete change of half the members of the House every two years, the other half remaining for a further two years. Under that system you can have a closer representation of public opinion, while the balance of members would prevent matters going wrong in times of crises or of excitement. I fancy the principle involved in this scheme is too advanced for me to ask this Government to adopt it; but perhaps Ministers might consider it, and, as we are a progressive people, in a year or two we may have another change in the Constitution Act, and then the principle may be adopted. So far as the representation of the goldfields is concerned, I think the people there will be well satisfied, for they have been justly if not too generously treated. I am glad to see this increase in goldfields representation, and I should also like to see an increase in the representation of Fremantle. I do not think there is a member in the House who takes exception to the Bill as far as it goes; but as we are going to give increased representation to various constituencies, it would have been a justifiable step if the Government had gone further and recognised the justice of the principle of one-adult-one-vote, and given women the right to exercise the franchise. I hope I shall be able to test the feeling of the House on this subject; and, if I have the opportunity, I think we shall go close to passing it. If we do not pass it this session, I hope we will pass it in the next. If I rightly judge the hon. member for West Kimberley, I think I may say that, if I cannot claim his vote this session, I will be able to claim it next session, if the question is then brought forward.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I congratulate the Government upon the introduction of this Bill. It is to me a matter of great satisfaction, inasmuch as last session I took on myself the extreme course of moving a vote of want of confidence in this Government because they did not

offer or propose, or give any assurance that they intended, to give increased representation to this country. I am glad to find the result of that course of action was this, that at the time it secured for the principle involved a response from a large number of members then sitting in the House, and who are to-night speaking in favour of this Bill. I felt at that time that a very large proportion of the people of this country were not fairly and equitably represented; and I felt it was not only necessary, but imperative, that I, as a goldfields member, should take some step to force the hand of the Government on this question. It was with the greatest satisfaction that I looked through this Bill, and found it as liberal as one could fairly expect in the circumstances in which we are placed. Looking first at my own district, I do think we are entitled to more representation; that is, if the basis of the new Bill had been population. Taking the basis which I judge the Ministry have taken as the starting-point for the introduction of this Bill—that is, the fair and equitable representation of interests rather than individuals—I think they have made a very just and fair distribution. I am inclined to think, too, that if they have erred at all, they have erred on the safer side of not increasing the number of members of this House too rapidly. I expect that great changes will take place in the time to come; and I think that, in the course of the making of those changes, some of the centres of population may be materially altered, especially the centres on the goldfields, while new centres will grow up, and new interests will be developed. Consequently, it is wise that we should hold something in our hand in order to give equitable representation when such cases arise. On the whole, I am satisfied with the Bill, so far as it goes, in this respect. I think, too, that the goldfields districts of the colony known as Coolgardie—which we know are extensive and wide-spread—have not been too liberally treated in the number of members allotted to them; still, I think and hope that these Coolgardie people will feel very well satisfied with the provisions of this Bill. I feel perfectly satisfied that the district which I have had the honour of representing up to the present, and which I am sorry to say is disappearing from the

map, will be content with the representation provided by the Bill. There will certainly not be a member for Nannine in the next session of Parliament, whether I have the honour to be here or not. The member for Nannine will disappear, according to the provisions of this Bill; but, notwithstanding that, I can express my confidence that the constituency which I have the honour to represent will be well satisfied with the way in which the Government have distributed the seats in that electorate. I did expect one extra seat in the division. I did think that the Government would probably have given a seat to Magnet and the district around, for it is a large and prosperous and increasing district. I also did think that they would have given a separate member to Lawler's, and the country away to the Eastward, or rather to the South of East. However, I think they will be fairly well satisfied, especially if later on the Government propose to bring them together by means of a railway from Magnet to Lawler's. I also wish to express my sympathy with the case which has been placed before the House for the increase of the representation of Fremantle, as a just and equitable case. I do hope the Government will be willing either to increase the number of members from 43 to 44, in order to meet this claim which has been fairly and justly put forward, or else that they will be willing to listen to a proposal to combine some of those large and extensive electorates up North, which are represented mostly by sheep rather than by electors. There are large tracts of country there with 30 or 40 electors, and I do not know how many thousands of sheep, and we are expected in this House to provide seats simply for such tracts of country. We have, it is true, two able hon. members representing two of those Northern districts; but if the Government are not prepared to increase the number of members to 44, so as to give the additional member desired by the Fremantle members, I do think they ought to combine some of those large electorates and provide the extra seat for Fremantle. It is not reasonable that this House should have the predominating power away in the North, where there are few settlers, and where the interests are identical from one end to the other. If we are looking to interests instead of to

population, we can well do as I suggest. I do not desire this, nor do I propose it, unless the Government do not see their way clear to increasing the number of members from 43 to 44, in order to give Fremantle an extra member. I will go to another point in which I feel a very strong interest. I have over and over again in this House, at every opportunity, urged on the Government the absolute necessity of increasing the number of Ministers who have charge of the affairs of this country. The work that requires to be done, the vast amount of change that is going on, the development which is increasing daily, and the resources which are being opened up in different parts of the country, demand such a close attention from Ministers, that it is utterly impossible for Ministers to take charge of several important departments and do justice to the State. Here we stand to-day with a widely extending railway system, and any hon. member in this House, or any person in this country, would say the Railway Department, if it is to be efficiently managed and worked effectively to the satisfaction of the country, by any ordinary or extraordinary man, will occupy one man's whole attention, if that man does his duty and does justice to the State. Then we have an increasing Public Works Department, which is not, in any sense, identical with the Railway Department. Its interests are diverse, and if we are to undertake some system of water conservation, which is absolutely necessary, even if we reject the scheme now before the House, we shall give to the Public Works Department a vast amount of increased work. If justice is to be done to this large department, if the various public works are to be carried out in the way they should be, it will be one man's whole duty, and it will occupy all the strength and intellect he possesses to rightly manage such a department. Then we come again to the Posts and Telegraph Department. In other countries they have been compelled to have one Minister for this department alone, but here a vast amount of work is being poured into this department, and while I am quite willing to make every allowance for the difficulties this development means, yet, after making allowance, there is not that consideration for the public inter-

est shown which there ought to be shown. The present system of the department is doing vast injury to the colony. I do not say it is the Minister's fault, or that of the head of the department, or of anyone in it; but I say it needs more attention, and that it is impossible for one man to give his attention to the Mines Department and also to the Posts and Telegraph Department. In Clause 13 of this Bill the Government propose to increase the number of Ministers only to six. I had hoped it would be possible—of course it won't be possible for a private member to move in the matter—for the Ministry to see their way clear to increase the number to at least seven. I do not think, in the condition of this country, that the public business can be properly managed unless we have at least seven Ministers. There is one other question of great interest to me, and I have already given notice of it; but I think it my duty to give some indication of it to the Government and the country. In the Constitution which we now have, and under which we are working, Clause 39 gives the qualifications for persons to be registered, and in sub-section (c) we have this condition: that a lease or license from the Crown, empowering the holder, subject to payment of at least £10 sterling per annum, to depasture, cultivate, or mine upon Crown lands, gives a right to vote. If the holder who pays £10 to the State has his holding inside a roads board district or municipality where any tax is levied, by virtue of paying that tax he is registered on the electoral roll without any personal application made by himself. I contend that the miner who takes up 6 or 12 acres of land, and pays his £1 per acre for that land, is a lessee of the Crown, and by virtue of that position he is entitled, if land is to entitle anyone, to be placed on the electoral roll. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: You had better test it.] I know under the Electoral Act he can be placed on the roll by making application and sending in a certain claim; but the difficulty is that these men are so far away, and the electoral offices so far away, and the conditions of the Electoral Act are so cumbersome. The persons who can witness the necessary documents are often so far away from the men who are entitled to vote, that the Electoral Act itself

excludes a large number of persons. I desire that a man entering, say, the district of Kalgoorlie, and taking out his miner's right in that district in the registrar's office, takes out his electoral right if he has been 12 months in the country. I desire that his name, being registered as the holder of a miner's right in that office, shall be sent forward by the registrar of that district, and the vote shall be placed on the electoral roll for Kalgoorlie. Hon. members in speaking in other places on this question, and the Premier when at Kalgoorlie, have said my idea on the question was that a miner's right should carry a vote, and that the miner should take his miner's right into the polling place and vote; but I never suggested so, or had any such foolish idea in my mind. What I do say is that, just as the ratepayer can and is placed on the electoral roll without personal application, so the man who is a miner and holds his miner's right, and has been the requisite time in the country, should be registered by the mining registrar in the same way as he would be if a ratepayer in another part of the colony. The miner's right would be stamped for identification when voting; and, having it stamped, it would be impossible to use that paper again. My object is to bring about a condition of things by which miners shall, by virtue of their miners' right and residence, be placed on the electoral roll; and until we have something like this, or arrange for something else, as was spoken of in this House—and that is the transfer of voters—it will be impossible to give to the shifting population of the colony the franchise. It is all very well for the Government to say, "Give the franchise;" but I say that will only nominally give it, as the condition demanding six months' residence in a district debars half the people in this colony of the power of voting, and unless we give them something to get over the difficulty, we shall not be able to have the representation we desire. I am sure the Government do not desire these sixteen or seventeen thousand able-bodied men should be debarred from voting. Surely the Government are quite willing to allow every man to vote?

THE PREMIER: If he has been on the roll.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No fear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier says he has given manhood suffrage to this country. [THE PREMIER: Certainly.] Manhood suffrage means that every man has a right to vote if he has been in the country a sufficient time. [THE PREMIER: So he has.] I say he has not.

THE PREMIER: It is the same as in Queensland.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If he crosses a street or a certain boundary he loses his right; therefore his right is not based on his manhood, but upon residence. I say this is not what the Government have told this country. They have said the Government have given the vote upon manhood; but this is a vote upon residence and upon location.

THE PREMIER: It is the same law everywhere.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I can quote the case of a gentleman not now in this country, the Rev. Mr. Dunstan, whom everyone knows, that when here he took much interest in the affairs of this country. He was here for five years, and because he had to shift his residence several times, owing to the exigencies of household affairs, he was unable to get on the electoral roll for the whole five years. That is not an exceptional case, as there are thousands of similar cases.

THE PREMIER: He was shifting a good deal.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am aware there has been an alteration to this rule; but then he could get on the roll only in February in any year, and he had to be in the district six months previous to his application, so that if he shifted in August he would be 17 months before he could get on the roll. We have altered that to some extent; and if the Government are sincere in desiring that the miners should have a vote, they will, when I propose this amendment, give me that support which, if they are sincere in their desire to give the miners a vote, they should give.

THE PREMIER: They won't take the trouble to make application.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No man knows better than the Premier about the matter. How can a man at Menzies get registered, when the electoral district office is at Southern Cross, unless there is someone to represent him? The Premier knows it. [THE PREMIER: Do I?] Well, I am sorry

if he does not. I thought the Premier knew everything. When we hear him, we are inclined to think he knows everything, and one or two things besides, and that other hon. members know very little. I do not claim to know a great deal, but I know this, that there are hundreds of men in my own district who are anxious to get on the electoral roll, and are doing their best to do it, but the Electoral Act is an absolute bar to their getting on. Any hon. member who knows anything about the goldfields districts knows this is correct. If this amendment I have suggested is admitted, and we have the support of the Government, it will be an improvement; but we cannot do anything without the support of the Government, for if the Government say "no," a large majority of the House will go "no," and the same people will say "yes" if the Government say "yes." It was not my intention to say one word on the question of payment of members, but so much has been said to-night that it becomes necessary to make a remark at this particular juncture. What is the objection of those hon. members who say they are opposed to payment of members? There is one objection that may be raised, and that is that we cannot afford to pay our members; or another objection may be raised, that the money may be better applied. Possibly it could be, and that is the view taken by the hon. member for West Kimberley. But in this country of what has been well termed "magnificent distances," how can we get representatives in this House who shall represent those magnificent distances? Are we for ever to be condemned to have in this House only members who happen to reside in Perth or its vicinity? Are we never to be at liberty to elect from the intelligence of this great country men whose interests and whose personal knowledge and experience would be invaluable in this House on questions relating to those particular districts? Are we for ever to be compelled either to select men whose wealth enables them to sacrifice themselves on the altar of their country, or to select men who happen to be resident in the centres of population? This is not a state of things satisfactory in a small country where there are great distances. I am not sure that I should hold so strong a conviction on this

question, but when you want Kimberley represented and the far Eastern goldfields, surely we should welcome men who would be selected by their fellows in those districts—men whose ability and intelligence are equal to those of the vast majority of members who now sit here or are likely to sit for many years to come. But such men are positively debarred from taking the position that their fellow-men desire them to occupy, simply because they cannot afford the necessary expense. There are many men whose earnings are not greater than £250 a year, who have sufficient mental ability, experience, and culture to properly represent their fellows here, and who would come and would be selected by their fellows, if there were payment of members. And why should they not? And why should this country be compelled for ever, for it practically comes to that, to select its representatives from the limited number who reside in Perth, and the still smaller number who can afford to lay aside their daily avocations and serve their fellow men? Opposition to this argument is absolutely untenable. If the Premier of this country was the first man—and all honour to him for it—to declare for manhood suffrage in this country, I think the logical outcome is payment of members. I think it was at Geraldton he announced that he was in favour of manhood suffrage. [AN HON. MEMBER: No; Bunbury.] We had the assurance, in that speech, that the changes he proposed to make would be in that direction. If manhood suffrage is to be adopted in any country, I say the only logical outcome of it is payment of members, because if every man has a right to vote, every man has a right to sit, and if every man has a right to sit, the country should provide him with the necessary means to do his duty for the country's good.

THE PREMIER: I don't know that that follows.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. gentleman may dispute the logic, but one thing is clear—he can't dispute the fact that if the people of this country desire to send representatives, they have a right to send them. [THE PREMIER: Certainly.] If John Jones cannot come here unless he is paid—[THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: He can stop away.]—I wish to let people know the Attorney General

is not in favour of manhood suffrage, and I rather fancy the Attorney General had a hand in framing an Act preventing manhood suffrage from being an accomplished fact. If constituents send John Jones to this House to do public business, logically John Jones should be paid out of the public funds. You cannot get away from the issue that manhood suffrage, if worked on true principles, must include the principle of payment of members. But the question is not one that I am now desirous of bringing particularly before the House, though I am not going to run away from my colours when the question is before us. If the hon. member for Yilgarn takes the step he proposes, he will have an opportunity of dividing the House. One question was imported into the debate by the hon. member for East Perth. I want to declare — finally, absolutely, and for ever — my distinct and positive opposition to woman's suffrage. I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I make the statement that I am against it, and I am going to continue against it until hon. members can produce very much better reasons than have ever been produced in the world yet. All experience with woman's suffrage, so far as it has gone, is that it is simply a dual vote. It is simply increasing your votes without increasing the judgment and experience — I won't say the intelligence, because the ladies have quite as much intelligence, and very often more than the men—but, so far as voting is concerned, the whole experience is that the women and men vote together, and you get two votes instead of one. You do not get an increased expression of opinion. What we want, in voting, is not simply a mass vote that will include two thousand instead of one thousand, but the calm intelligence of one or two thousand persons on the questions of the day; and, for many other reasons that I will not enter into at present, I am not in favour of woman's suffrage. I know that those in favour of total abstinence say, that if we had woman's suffrage we should soon have total abstinence; but I say if total abstinence is never won until it is won on woman's suffrage, it is better never to be won at all. But that subject is not now before the House. I may say, in conclusion, without occupying further time,

that it is with very great satisfaction I welcome this Bill; and I congratulate the Government in several respects: first, because they have had the courage to calmly estimate what is the desirable strength of representation that should be given to this country; and, next, that they have had the courage to give equitable representation to the goldfields, and also to give—what I think was called for—two extra seats. Now to make this Bill completely perfect, as far as things can be made perfect, if the Government will yield to the request of the Fremantle members, and give another seat there, and make the membership 44, also increase the number of Ministers to 7 instead of 6, I think this Bill will be as good a Bill as it is possible to devise, and therefore I give it my hearty support.

MR. HASSELL: I will not detain the House long, but I congratulate the Government on the Bill, and I think the country is to be congratulated. I cannot quite agree with the members for Fremantle, that we need more representation, as the Bill, as it stands, is a very fair and good one, and gives the country what it desires. There may be other matters, in committee, as to which I may not feel altogether in unison with the Government, and may support other members; but, taking it as a whole, I must congratulate the Government on the Bill as brought in, and must give it my hearty support.

MR. SIMPSON: I think the Government are improving, and that the seed sown last season is showing fruit. Several matters have been mentioned in connection with this Bill, and in committee I have no doubt suggestions will be made for increasing the number of members, which suggestions seem to give general satisfaction. Personally, I should gladly have welcomed a higher remuneration for the services rendered to the country by Ministers, as, considering how things are advancing, the salary is entirely inadequate for the services rendered. I should like to have seen provision made for the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board, and I hope the necessary steps will be taken to secure that end. I asked for some correspondence in connection with that matter, but I have no doubt, owing to the press of business, the Premier has not been able to lay it

on the table. Still, the time has arrived when we should place that very silly arrangement on a satisfactory basis. This year nearly £20,000 is to be handed to this irresponsible Board; and to continue this slur, that the British Parliament will not trust us to deal humanely with the aborigines, is a mistake. I should be perfectly prepared, at the same time, to meet the ideas of some people by giving them every assurance that proper care will be taken of the aboriginal natives of this colony. I see, from the report before the House from the Aborigines Protection Board, that this unfortunate race is reducing in numbers. We know they will reduce, and, eventually, disappear; but, as a man who travels through the land considerably, I say the aborigines are treated by the settlers humanely, and wherever attempts are made at inhumanity, every man seems to look on it as his duty to see that such cases are fairly investigated, and to see that no recurrence shall happen. I should be glad if the Premier could find time to lay on the table the despatches from the Secretary of State regarding this Aborigines Protection Board, so that we may deal with it in a way satisfactory to the country. With regard to the principle of payment of members, I have ever been an advocate of it, as I could never find any solid reason against it; though I must say that, since its introduction throughout Australia, it has been an abject failure. I consider that failure is not due to any weakness of the principle, but simply to the means that have been adopted to secure individual members with means of subsistence. That is a matter that should never be in the hands of any Government, so as to give them the power of allotting salaries placed in their hands—a power that could be worked very much to the injury of the country. It is known that it has been worked to the injury of one of the colonies, and that there a majority was kept together for years by a threat that if certain members did not give their support to doubtful measures, the Government would demand a dissolution, and members would have to risk their re-election and their salaries. To my mind the principle is unassailable; but the payment of members should come from the people who select the candidate. Give them absolute

choice, and, if a man is unable to give all his time, let the people put their hands in their own pockets. In that way there would be a spirit of independence established right through the principle, that selection should be as wide as possible, so that the manhood of the country should have the opportunity of returning members to Parliament. I congratulate the country on the Bill now submitted. The goldfields will, I think, be satisfied with the liberal treatment they have received. I have not a shadow of doubt that they will so avail themselves of the advantages that they will add to valuable legislation by the class of men they will return. The member for East Perth was very right when he said, "The goldfields fellows are not such a terrible lot, though they do grumble a little;" but the newspapers must have something to write about, and, if there is nothing better, you must say something about the Government, and it is so much easier to say something against them. I do not think it affects the Attorney General, but it may the Premier, as I hear he is a deep student of the newspapers. I think the class of men sent in will aid our legislation very much; and the spirit that seems to have risen lately, of running one industry against another, will disappear day by day, as various localities have equitable representation, and the truth is learned that our industries are dependent one on another. I shall be happy to give my assistance for the speedy passage of this Bill; and I hope the time when we go before the country will not be very long, as during the last twelve months our population has increased more than 50 per cent., and it places every member of Parliament in a more solid position when he realises he is in touch with the opinion of the day, and is placing on the statute book measures absolutely the desire of the country. Woman's suffrage will certainly have my support. I know it is a matter at present looked on as an experiment in Australia; but for the last 30 years the women's vote has been exercised in Australia in municipal matters, and I do not think they have misused their power. When we realise the avenues opened up for women right through the world, and that they are not absolutely dependent on some one to come along

and marry them, they should have some voice in the country. They can use a beneficial influence with regard to the liquor traffic, sanitary matters, and with regard to social matters, in which their experience and knowledge must be of great value to men; but, when the proposal is brought forward, we will have the opportunity of discussing it. I congratulate the Government on having adopted the suggestion of the Opposition, for the appointment of an additional Minister, and I hope they will not forget the proposal for an additional member for Fremantle, as it is likely to accomplish much good.

MR. CLARKSON: In common with other members who have spoken, I congratulate the Government on bringing in such a measure. It is a Bill that satisfies everyone—even the hon. member for Nannine, who generally has some fault to find with Government measures. I was afraid that pressure would be brought to bear on the Government to give the goldfields a much larger representation, as I heard something about 15 members being required for the goldfields; but I should certainly have opposed such a preponderance of voting power. I do not consider the goldfield representatives would have the interests of the colony so much at heart as those who have been here longer, and are likely to remain longer. The hon. member for Nannine never loses the opportunity of introducing the subject of manhood suffrage, I do not believe the men on the fields care much about it. They will not take the trouble to register their votes; and, when they have registered their claims, they won't vote. Even in the settled districts, people will not take the trouble to register their votes; and, when they have registered them, they won't take the trouble to vote, as is shown by recent elections. I am inclined to agree with the members for Fremantle, that they should have another constituency. Their claim seems to be reasonable; and, if brought before the House as an amendment, I hope the Government will agree to it. I think they have a fair and reasonable claim, and I hope it will be agreed to; but I am opposed to payment of members. I do not like the idea of paying men for attending Parliament. The hon. member for Nannine wanted to know what objec-

tion there was to it. I think there are several, and one is that we should have a class of men that possibly we should not like. Men who come here for the sake of getting pay might be very objectionable men.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They come without being paid.

MR. CLARKSON: If we were to have manhood suffrage in the way suggested, I am afraid we should have a number of gentlemen who would not be welcome in this Legislative Chamber. Woman's suffrage I am in favour of—that is to a certain extent. I would not go so far as to say I would give every woman a vote, any more than I would give a vote to every man; but every woman with certain qualifications and property should have a vote, and if that amendment is proposed I will support it. I do not think it necessary to say more on the subject now, for I believe every member approves of the Bill almost in its present shape, though some alterations may be made in committee. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I am induced to address a few words to my friends opposite to me, and it cannot but be most gratifying to the Government to find with what satisfaction this Bill seems to have been received all round the House, and the state of the House at present testifies to that feeling of satisfaction. It must not be forgotten that this is one of the most important Bills that the Government could place before the Assembly, and it promises to attract a great deal of attention. At one time this question caused much feeling on the goldfields; and now that the work of the Government is on the table, those people on the fields to whom the hon. member for Yilgarn alluded—who were generous enough to suggest that any number of members the Government might give to the fields would be counteracted by an equivalent number given elsewhere—will say they were mistaken in the opinion they formed of the motives and intentions of the Government. It is recognised now that the Government were in close touch with the feeling of the goldfields, and of the centres of population at Perth and Fremantle. Absolutely, this Bill has been received without adverse comment; and there is only one mat-

ter, a small one, which has invited the members for Fremantle to suggest an improvement. I congratulate the members for Fremantle on having made the suggestion in the friendly way they did; and their suggestion seems to have "taken on." If a fourth member is required—and that is the feeling of the House—and if Perth, by its members, join in the opinion, the Government do not feel that they have any right to press the House to reject this proposal. We are quite willing to consider this point, when it more properly arises in committee on the Bill. At the present moment, I am justified in saying that the Government will not strongly oppose this additional member for Fremantle, as it appears to be the wish of the House that the claim should be conceded to it. The Government, in framing the Bill, and allotting representation in the several districts, had their attention drawn to the point now raised by the members for Fremantle; and I dare say it will be seen that no injustice has been done to Fremantle in the Bill. But, at the same time, perhaps there is room for the arguments put forward; and, if members think there is enough to justify an extra member, I do not think the Government will be found opposing it. One or two controversial subjects have been drawn in during the course of the debate, especially that of payment of members. I never can see the wisdom or utility of expressing opinions prematurely; and I think it will be sufficient, when the question of payment of members arises, to express my opinion then. But I think the subject cannot arise in this particular connection, as it involves the payment of public money; and that is a proposal that can emanate only from the Government, as the hon. member for Nannine knows, and, therefore, we are quite within our rights in reserving our opinions on the matter. There is a good deal to be said on both sides; but, for my own part, I am not sure that I ought not to be satisfied in saying no more on the subject, after the diverse opinions expressed from the Opposition benches. We have learned that the hon. member for Nannine, who is generally in agreement with the hon. member for Geraldton, favours payment of members; while the hon. member for Geraldton thinks it iniquitous and detri-

mental to the public interest. Of course, like everything new, it is attractive to some people; and, when the women first had the opportunity of voting, no doubt, in America, they did flock to the poll; but, after their curiosity was satisfied, the number of women who went a second time to the poll was positively very few; and now I see, from a paper lately, that it was intended, in one or two places where the system had been tried in America, to repeal the whole thing; and there is no doubt that, when the matter comes to be threshed out here, we shall agree that the whole thing is rubbish, and nothing else. The hon. member for Nannine brands the Act as cumbersome, but it is impossible to find an Electoral Act that is not cumbersome. You cannot frame an Electoral Bill that is good and simple. The provisions in our Electoral Act also find a place in all measures of this description. A voter must be an elector for a certain district, and if we allowed transfer of votes from one district to another, that system might lead to the packing of one district by electors carrying their moveable votes into an adjoining district. I, and other members of the Government, have tried to do something in this direction, so as to prevent the anomaly of a man losing his vote because he may happen to live at the boundary of, say, East and West Perth, and lose his vote if, by changing his residence, he crosses over a certain street; but the Government have not been more successful than were the politicians in Queensland, when they tried the same experiment. Although Sir Samuel Griffith himself introduced an amendment to lessen the difficulty and inconvenience of a man having to register again after removing into a new district, the transfer of votes from one district to another was found to be unworkable in Queensland, and they gave it up after a time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have it in South Australia.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I do not know about South Australia. The hon. member for Nannine also asks us to give a liberal franchise. I think I have done my share for the attainment of that object when the matter was before the House in 1888; and yet we now hear that it is impossible for a voter to get on the roll. I cannot under-

stand anyone saying so at the present moment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I meant in proportion to population.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Then, as regards the difficulty of registry in the district alluded to by the hon. member, surely at Lawler's—or, indeed, in any place where men have a desire to get on the roll—there is a police inspector, or constable, or postmaster, in the locality, who has power under the Act to receive claims for registration; and, in fact, one or other of these officers is generally to be found wherever there are 100 persons settled in a district. Then, again, the time or date for getting on the roll is not now limited, and registration can take place all the year round. I do not think the facilities for easy registration under this Act can be surpassed. The hon. member also desired that a miner's right should entitle to a vote; but there is a great difference between the holder of a miner's right as compared with a lessee of the Crown who pays £10 a year for a lease of land. If, however, the lessee paid only £9, he would not get the franchise. My experience leads me to think that the class of man for whom the hon. member wishes to obtain the franchise cares little or nothing about politics. The man who is a politician is one, as the hon. member knows, who has little or nothing else to do except busy himself in politics; and one strong objection brought against payment of members is that such men are not reliable or desirable, because they make politics a business for getting the pay. I think the hon. member's strictures on the Electoral Act are undeserved. The terms of that Act are very liberal, and cannot, I think, be improved on. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Geraldton to insert a clause in the Bill dealing with the Aborigines Protection Board, I may remind him that the Bill passed by this House last session for repealing the particular provision in the Constitution Act relating to this Board, is now before the Secretary of State in London; and, being thus in suspense, it would be improper and unconstitutional for this House to again pass a measure somewhat of the nature of the Bill now before the Secretary of State. In conclusion, I would

like to express my thanks to all hon. members of this House for the way in which they have received this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th July, 1896.

Question: Reported Disgraceful Scenes at Kalgoorlie—
Question: Repairs to Albany Jetty—Question: Alleged Statements by Member for York: personal explanation—Question: Clause 11 of Goldfields Act—Companies Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Noxious Weeds Bill: first reading—Statutory Declarations Bill: first reading—Sale of Liquors Regulation Bill: first reading—Streets and Roads Closure (Eastern Railway) Bill: third reading—Adoption of Children Bill: third reading—"Hansard" Reporting Staff: report of select committee—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—REPORTED DISGRACEFUL SCENES AT KALGOORLIE.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether he had received complaints of any indecent and disgraceful scenes occurring in Hannan Street, Kalgoorlie, or whether his attention had been called to a letter appearing on the subject in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of July 27. If it had not been brought under his notice, whether he would cause inquiries to be made, and, if the evil were found to exist, give directions to the police or other authority to have the nuisance suppressed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) replied that he had not read the letter referred to, but that the hon. member's question had been forwarded to the Commissioner of Police, who had been asked to make a full inquiry into the matter.