

of formalities had to be gone through, and the Minister might exercise this power on behalf of the local authorities. Upon the publication in the *Government Gazette* of the proclamation of the Governor, the land vested in His Majesty or the local authorities, as the case might be, and the formalities described in the Act were brought into operation. The local authority could not themselves come in under this proclamation and take land, but if they desired to get it they had to apply to the Ministry of the day and obtain their authority.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Surely towns were represented by municipal councils, and districts by roads boards. The definition should stand.

Amendment negatived.

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that the words "but shall not include any reserves except those gazetted under the Permanent Reserves Act, 1899," be added to the definition of "public reserve." Mr. Moss had somewhat indignantly resented the justifiable warmth he (Mr. Hackett) had displayed. It was not believed that there was any conspiracy, but a degree of negligence amounting to great culpability; and with that he charged the Minister. Doubtless there was no deliberate intent to take away the rights of the people to those reserves which on their behalf Parliament had made permanent, because Clause 12 exempted from certain purposes of the Bill land gazetted under the Act of 1899.

HON. M. L. MOSS: After reading Clause 12, the hon. member should withdraw his charge of culpability.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not that of negligence.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Sub-clause 2 of Clause 12 sufficiently safeguarded permanent reserves, and the amendment would be redundant.

Amendment passed.

HON. D. CONNOLLY moved that progress be reported.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	6
Noes	...	...	...	10
				—
Majority against	...	...	...	4

AYES.
Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. W. T. Loton
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. D. Connolly
(Teller).

NOES.
Hon. T. F. O. Brimage
Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. A. Jameson
Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. J. W. Wright
Hon. C. Sommers
(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

At 6-25, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7-30, Chair resumed.

On motion by HON. M. L. MOSS, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 7-33 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly, Thursday, 9th October, 1902.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Copy of Regulations for the guidance of Surveyors.
Ordered: To lie on the table.

FOOD DUTIES—PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I ask leave to make a personal explanation with regard to the division last evening

on the question of the food duties. It was my intention, as I believe it was the intention of several other members, to vote in favour of the amendment for the remission of some of the food duties; but unfortunately when the division was taken, we were not aware that it was being taken on the amendment. The result was that several members besides myself—I believe the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) was one of the number—voted against an amendment which we strongly favoured. I shall therefore be glad to have it recorded in *Hansard* that I, at least, am in favour of having the duties taken off certain articles of food.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): I also wish to make a personal explanation, since my name has been mentioned. I have been blamed by some members for misleading them; and I wish to say that I voted for my motion in the first place believing that those who were against it would go to the other side of the House. On this occasion, for the first time most of those against my motion voted with me instead of following precedent. That circumstance explains how a number of members came to be misled. I did not anticipate the change of mind on the part of the members to whom I refer.

QUESTION--RABBIT DEPARTMENT.

MR. HARPER asked the Premier: Whether it is the intention of the Government to continue the same management of the Rabbit Department which has succeeded in completing 12 miles of fence in 12 months, after having been given a practically free hand by Parliament.

THE PREMIER replied: There were very many difficulties and causes for delay in the way of this department in its initial stages owing to the absence of reliable data, and also owing to Ministerial changes. More vigorous efforts are being made now, and I am confident that satisfactory progress will be made in the future. I shall personally welcome the assistance and advice of every member who can assist in carrying out this work effectively.

MINES DEVELOPMENT BILL.

REINSTATEMENT AFTER COUNT-OUT.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES, the Order of the Day for the

second reading was restored to the Notice Paper (having lapsed after a count-out).

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I do not intend to say much more regarding this Bill, as I gave expression to my main objections the other evening. Arrangements can easily be come to when the Bill is in Committee for the making of some slight amendments in the first portion, so that it may be less drastic than it is now. I feel sure the House will agree to the adoption of amendments tending to make advances under this Bill more of the nature of advances, and less of the nature of guaranteed loans, so that if nothing should be discovered both parties, the company on the one part and the Government on the other, would equally lose the amounts put in, whilst, on the other hand, if something should be discovered as the result of operations carried on with Government assistance, a lien over the lease should be secured to the Government with a view to preventing trickery on the part of the borrowers to get out of repayment. The remaining portions of the Bill, as I have previously stated, meet with my hearty support. I do not think they require much amendment. Feeling satisfied that all the points in the Bill to which I take exception can be dealt with in Committee, I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): Like the member for Dundas, I hope the Bill, when in Committee, will be amended in certain respects. I do not propose to enter into my objections to various provisions of the measure at the present time, because I feel that in Committee alone one can ascertain whether it is possible to relax the regulations which bear too heavily on those who are to benefit by the passage of the Bill. I may take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister for Mines on bringing forward the measure. From my experience of the House, I feel certain that there will be no hesitation in intrusting him with the powers he seeks under the Bill. Some remarks have been made contrasting this measure with the Agricultural Bank Bill. I observe

that the two Bills are, to a large extent, framed on the same lines. No matter how much greater the importance we attach to the mining industry as compared with the farming industry, still we cannot ask that those whom this Bill is intended to benefit should get loans on better terms than borrowers from the Agricultural Bank. However, all these matters can be dealt with in Committee; and I hope the Minister will proceed to that stage as soon as possible.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply): I am indeed pleased at the manner in which this Bill has been received by the mining members. So far as I can judge, objection is really taken to only one clause of the Bill—that which confers on the Minister the power, or imposes on him the obligation, to obtain a mortgage on the machinery and plant of any lease to the holders of which money is advanced. In this connection, I wish to explain that I do not believe the part of the Bill referred to will be availed of to a very great extent. At all events, it is not my intention to seek to make many advances under that portion of the measure. I hold it should be availed of only in special cases, where the Government feel satisfied that assistance to a company which has expended a large amount of money on its property would probably lead to a renewal of prosperity in the locality of the mine. It remains for the House to say whether the Mines Department should take a mortgage over all the assets of a company borrowing. So far as the other restrictions are concerned—I think the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) said there were too many—I really consider that the Minister's hands ought to be tied as much as possible, so that it will be compulsory to get all possible information and to take every precaution for the protection of the State before an advance is granted. In connection with Part II., some hon. members may consider that the maximum of £200 ought to be increased. I hold, however, that in granting loans to the extent of £200 on prospecting properties, the State will be going quite far enough. The remaining features of the Bill will, I think, meet with the general approval of the House. If any suggestions for farther liberalising the Bill should be made in Committee, I shall be only too pleased to

accept them, provided the House cares to be liberal.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER in charge.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—No advance to exceed one-half value of improvements or the sum of £1,200:

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): Under the clause it was provided that advances should not exceed one-half of the estimated value of the improvements made and those proposed to be made. As far as the valuation was concerned, it would be more simple to have the ordinary rules of valuation apply, and if land was not fee simple, then the person making the valuation would have regard to that fact. It was suggested by Subclause 1 that there would first be a valuation of the leasehold on the assumption that it was fee simple; then by Subclause 2, where the land was not fee simple, there should be taken from the face value certain sums to make up the amount. It was pointed out on the second reading that if only one-half was advanced, that did not allow sufficient margin. Cases no doubt would crop up where the full value could not be availed of. The money the Government advanced, or some part of it, ought to be put into the land by way of improvement. It was impossible to have all the money put into the land because by Clause 2, Subclause 1, money could be advanced to pay off liabilities.

MR. FIGOTT: But advances were only made against improvements.

THE PREMIER: Advances were made against the value of the land and the improvements: that was one of the variations in the Bill. He suggested that the clause should be amended so as to provide that no advance under the Bill should exceed three-fourths of the fair estimated value of the land with the improvements made thereon, and in every case not less than one-third of the advance should be expended on the land in improvements, in accordance with Subclause 2 of Clause 2 of the Bill, and that at no time should the advance to any one person exceed £1,200. When

valuing the land the improvements proposed to be made should not be valued also. It would be wise to provide that one-third of the advance should go towards the improvement of the land. Under the principal Act three-fourths of the value of the improvements could be advanced, but the whole amount had to be spent in improvements. If members looked at Clause 4, and bore in mind that as it stood the Bill allowed one element of valuation to the improvements proposed to be made, after all not a great deal of variation was made by the amendment. If a person said, "My land is worth £1,000, I propose to put in £500," there would be a valuation of £1,500, and the man would be entitled to one-half of that, which would be £750.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Supposing the man had to pay off a mortgage of £500.

THE PREMIER: Even if the man had to pay £500 out of the full amount of the advance, there would be available £250 to carry out improvements, therefore the man would have to find the balance somewhere else; but supposing a man had not to pay off any mortgage, and his land was worth £1,000, and this man proposed to spend £500 in improvements, that would make the value of the land £1,500, and if one-half of that amount was advanced, it would mean £750. Therefore a man, in a case like that, could obtain £750, which would be three-fourths of £1,000. There was this great protection in the amendment: it insisted in every case that a certain proportion of the money should be put into improvements. This amending Bill was an important departure from the principal Act, as he had explained on the second reading. Under Clause 4 as it stood, a borrower would be able to borrow sufficient to pay off existing liabilities, and there would be no obligation upon him to put any part of the money into the land. That was not intended to be allowed. In advancing money to pay off an existing liability, the object of the Bill was that the borrower should carry out improvements. The Agricultural Bank was not intended to be a mere bank of advance; and although Clause 2 gave the right to advance money for paying off liabilities, it was also intended by regulations that some

portion of the money so advanced should be used in improving the land.

MR. MORAN: Then the Bank would be protected by regulations?

THE PREMIER: It was optional with the manager of the Bank whether he would make advances or not for the purpose of paying off a mortgage.

MR. MORAN: Could the Bank manager impose additional terms besides those put in an Act of Parliament?

THE PREMIER: It was not necessary to make other terms, because the manager could say whether or not he would advance the money. There was always the right to refuse an advance.

MR. MORAN: On the face of the Bill, the Government provided that something should be done, and then by regulation they could refuse to do it.

THE PREMIER: A sum of money advanced under the Bill might be advanced for various purposes. Suppose a man wanted to borrow a thousand pounds, he might use it for all three of the purposes stated in Clause 2. The form of the clause, as he proposed to amend it, would be better than the clause as printed in the Bill, firstly because the principle was more equitable, and secondly a sum of not less than one-third of the amount advanced must be expended on the land. This, therefore, would improve the value of the land, and increase the margin of security to the State. The condition that not less than one-third of the advance should be expended on improvements would apply to all mortgages under the Bill. The altered form of the clause was intended as a precaution, by saying that at least one-third of the sum advanced should be spent on the land for improvement purposes, and that money must be spent in one of three ways as provided in Clause 2. If a man had a freehold unencumbered, and he borrowed £900 from the Agricultural Bank, he must spend at least £300 of that amount on the land, and any sum remaining could be spent only in the ways provided in Subclauses 2 and 3. It rested with the manager, in making an advance, to say how the money should be expended, though the clause in the altered form would be more cautious than the clause as printed in the Bill, to the extent that not less than one-third of the amount advanced should be expended on

the land. As to expending the rest of the money, this was left to the discretion of the manager within the limits of Clause 2. He moved that the clause be amended in the form he had stated to the Committee.

MR. HASTIE: It had not been made quite clear before that an advance was to be given only at the time the work had been done, and in that view of the matter the risk was not so great as it otherwise appeared. Still there would be a considerable risk under the Bill, mainly because the value of land fixed at a certain rate at one period, might decrease considerably at another period, as had been the experience in other States. Land had been assessed at a certain value for a period of five, seven, or ten years; then came a change, and the value would fall considerably. In this State we might have a certain valuation based on the general demand existing for agricultural produce; but when the productions of this State increased to such an extent as to more than supply the requirements of the people within the State, the producers would have to depend largely on selling their produce in markets outside. When that stage was reached, there would be a considerable decrease in the value of agricultural land; and he was doubtful whether this Bill would leave sufficient margin of security to meet such contingencies. It was doubtful, in his judgment, whether the State should advance so close up to the value as indicated in the remarks of the Premier.

MR. PIGOTT: By adopting the amendment or even passing the clause as it stood, we should be casting on the State a far greater responsibility than was intended by the framers of the original Act, who did not take the value of the land itself into consideration at all in estimating security, but confined themselves to the value of the improvements already made and those proposed to be made on the land. We should seriously consider whether it would not be wiser to adhere to the old system. The land in an improved farm, no doubt, constituted a good security; but if the improvements were allowed to go to rack and ruin, where was the value of the land? In this connection we should also bear in mind the fluctuations of land values.

MR. JACOBY: The success of the Agricultural Bank must always depend solely on its administration, and the system of administration laid down by the present manager (Mr. Paterson) was on such substantial and conservative lines that there was every guarantee of safety. Moreover, arrangements had been made for continuing in the future the system of administration which had proved so successful in the past. The Agricultural Bank had proved more successful in handling agricultural securities than any private financial institution, because handled by experts. The danger of decrease of value was practically non-existent, because the manager now in the first place decided whether the land was of the first, second, or third class, and then in making his valuation adopted the standard of value obtaining in the Eastern States. Vicinity of a farm to centres of population was not taken into consideration for the purposes of valuation. Land was valued merely from the point of view of agricultural production; and the unearned increment did not enter into the question at all.

MR. HOPKINS: Proximity to market must be a consideration.

MR. JACOBY: Yes. The vicinity of land to centres of population, which might result in the farm being cut up into building blocks, was not taken into consideration.

MR. DAGLISH: The Committee would do well to consider the wisdom of being conservative in its legislation, and not vesting in the manager the sole control of what in essence were trust funds. The question for decision was whether the amendment proposed by the Premier would involve the State in more than fair risk. Besides productive capacity, the value of products must be considered. Their value to-day was probably much more than it would be in four or five years' time, when our farmers would have overtaken the State's requirements; and land values must then inevitably fall.

MR. JACOBY: But present valuations were based on the value of agricultural land in the Eastern States.

MR. DAGLISH: That would not be a fair basis of value, if Western Australia were producing more than its requirements, because of the greater cost of

reaching the market from this State than from Eastern Australia.

MR. JACOBY: The Eastern States were no better off than this State in that respect.

MR. DAGLISH: With the elimination of Subclause 2, the clause seemed fair enough.

MR. GORDON: Seasons, among other things, affected the value of land. Much country taken up two years ago, on which money had been advanced by the Government, would have been thrown up if rains had not come in September; because small settlers, starting on a capital of only a few pounds and consequently falling into debt, were often knocked out by a single bad season. If the productivity of land was to form the sole basis of value, it followed that land was equally valuable whether 20 miles from a railway station or right alongside the railway line. Indeed, it also followed from the same argument that the value of land throughout the State must be taken at 10s. per acre in the maiden state. An effect which would speedily make itself felt in the land question was the taking over of the Midland Company's lands. If the hundreds of thousands of acres of good agricultural land at present locked up by the company were thrown open, a good many small holdings of to-day would be discarded in favour of selections in the Midland districts. He agreed with the members for Kanowna and Subiaco that too much caution could not be used in this instance.

HON. G. THROSSELL: The amendment was in every way favourable to both borrower and lender. One object of the Bill was to pay off liabilities already existing on holdings. This amendment was particularly designed to meet the case of those who had a liability on their property. A man with a property worth £1,000 was eligible to borrow only £500. If such a man owed £500 already on his property, he could borrow from the Government only sufficient to pay off the liability, and therefore would not be much better off. The amendment meant that three-fourths of the value, instead of one-half the value of the property, might be advanced on the condition that one-third of the amount advanced should be returned to the land. Thus, a man with a property worth £1,000 on which

£500 was owing, might borrow from the Government £750, on the understanding that one-third of that amount, £250, must be returned to the land. Accordingly the Government would still have a margin of £500. With regard to other borrowers the State, of course, had ample security, more particularly as all the money borrowed would go into the land. The Committee might adopt the amendment with every confidence.

MR. MORAN: A more vital change than this had never been proposed in connection with a banking institution. Under the original Agricultural Bank Act, which Act would govern this Bill, the classes of holdings on which money might be advanced were holdings in fee, special occupation leases, conditional purchase leases, and homestead farms. Under the old Act, the State of Western Australia offered to the world a free farm of 160 acres of as good land as could be obtained. That in itself was a good concession compared with the old land laws. Besides that free farm, given in its true natural state, the Agricultural Bank said to the man, "If you put your labour into the farm, we will advance you one-half of the value of the work." In any other country, in almost any age, the man would have to wait for the result of his labour. The advance enabled the man to live fairly comfortably as a pioneer. What might happen under the Bill? It was proposed to advance on the value of the land to begin with. That was a great departure, and at once removed the safeguard. A man went on to his free farm of 160 acres one day, and the next day he borrowed on that farm.

MR. HOPKINS: A man could not borrow until he got his title, in seven years.

MR. MORAN: Under the Bill a man might get an advance long before he obtained his title, because whatever fees or charges might be upon the land were deducted from the value of that land. A man might get an advance on the value of the land. Was that not so?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. MORAN: If a man could get an advance of the full value of the land, then a mighty change was proposed—to give a man, without doing anything to his farm, the value of his land. Three-fourths of the value of the improvements seemed to be very high; but he did not propose to

move to alter it. If members of the Government, who were so strenuous in their opposition to the old Act, now desired to go farther, such sudden conversion ought to be watched.

THE PREMIER said he was one of the strongest supporters of the Agricultural Bank Act when introduced.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member was the only one of his party who supported it. Did the Bill apply to pastoral leases?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. MORAN: The pastoralist who grew cattle could not get the benefit of his labour; but a man who bred cattle on a homestead lease could do so.

THE PREMIER: This Bill was to advance farming and grazing combined.

MR. MORAN: What did farming and grazing mean? Every grazier in the country had some little farm, if only a cabbage garden. There were stations 90 miles out of York and in the Toodyay district where portion of the land was farmed, but the produce was not brought into market. The owner of the farm grew the produce for his own purposes. Why should a man who grew cattle in the Kimberley district, who went pioneering and cultivating the soil, not get the benefit of his work the same as the men in the Toodyay or York districts? There were just as many permanent improvements made on pastoral leases as on farms. There were station buildings, dams, outhouses; all these were erected on pastoral leases as on farms, and were not pastoral leases fenced? The member for Gascoyne informed him that there were very few pastoral leases in the Northern portion of the country that had not from £10,000 to £15,000 worth of improvements upon them. A sum of £700 would be a magnificent amount to many people in the Kimberley district to make a start with. Many of the biggest station owners in the Kimberley district started with much less than £500. There were gentlemen in the House, Messrs. Connor and Doherty, who were large pastoralists, and he questioned whether those gentlemen had many thousands of pounds when they started. Was it admitted that stock raising was good security? It was questionable whether it was, but if it was good security in Northam and York it was good security in the Kimberley district. Was it pro-

posed to include stock on which advances were to be made?

THE PREMIER: The whole of the points raised by the member for West Perth had been explained when the Bill was introduced. The Agricultural Bank could hardly take security over stock, which was of a more or less uncertain value. One could not identify stock. The bank was thrown back on to the value of the land.

MR. MORAN: Was not stock worth as much in Kimberley as down here?

THE PREMIER: It was desired to encourage mixed farming. In the pastoral country tens of thousands of acres were held by one person.

MR. MORAN: All the more security.

THE PREMIER: Acre per acre had not the same relation to the stock carried in the North as down South. In the North-West a man did not go farming with a few hundred pounds or squatting with a few thousand pounds. Some of the men who were squatting in the North went there with nothing, but they had to spend a number of years before they obtained the position they now enjoyed. If a man went there with nothing but £1,200 which he obtained from the Government, he would soon "blue" it. Why discuss theories like those advanced by the member for West Perth? There was no necessity for an academic discussion. We had not reached that stage in the North-West where they had small holdings. He (the Premier) would be delighted to think that we could have stations considerably smaller than those in existence at present, and if that stage was arrived at, the provisions of the Bill might be made to apply.

MR. MORAN: There were small holdings in the Kimberley district.

THE PREMIER: In the Kimberley district there were stations comprising a million acres, and a small station in relation to that meant one of 200,000 acres. He believed a big runholder in Kimberley was prepared to subdivide his run and settle families there, who would be comparatively small holders, each of whom would have a certain number of cattle, and 50,000 or 60,000 acres of land. In that case there would be a body of small pastoralists in Kimberley, but that experiment he did not think had been yet tried.

MR. MORAN: There were plenty of small stations in Kimberley.

THE PREMIER: When one talked of small stations it was relative. A station of 50,000 or 60,000 or even 200,000 acres was small in the Kimberley district. The small pastoralist deserved to be encouraged; but it was not proposed to encourage him under this Bill. This legislation should be limited to the smaller class of settlers on the soil, and a comparatively small pastoralist was not the kind of man who was intended to be assisted under this Bill.

MR. GORDON: As to assisting small pastoralists, he sympathised with what the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) had said. There was an instance at Southern Cross, where a man was farming and held also a considerable area of leasehold land. Would he be entitled to borrow from the Agricultural Bank, under this Bill, on the security of his leasehold with the improvements made on it?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. GORDON: That man might hold a conditional-purchase area of 400 or 500 acres as well as the other land.

THE PREMIER: In that case he could apply for a loan under the Bill.

MR. GORDON: This limitation of loans to those agriculturists who carried on mixed farming would cause dissatisfaction among pastoralists, unless there was a rainfall area or some other clear line of distinction laid down.

MR. FOULKES: The reasons for introducing the original Act were that farmers found it almost impossible to get financial accommodation, because it was not the practice of banks to lend money on this class of security. With regard to the pastoral industry, there were many banks and financial institutions anxious to lend money to pastoralists, particularly on account of wool purchase. As to the risk of agricultural land depreciating in value, as had been suggested, the same risk applied to other kinds of security on which banks usually lent money. There were fluctuations of value in all classes of property, and managers of banks had to judge as to the risk in each case. Since the Agricultural Bank Act came into operation, only £10 appeared to have been lost on all the loans advanced. Not only was each application considered by the manager of the Bank, but it was for-

warded to the Minister, and presumably it went before the Cabinet also; so that there was ample opportunity for insuring the safety of the Bank in its transactions. Priority was to be given to applications for sums less than £500, and this also was intended to assist the smaller men. Any pastoralist who had a good run of country could get accommodation from banking institutions under present conditions, whereas small farmers could not obtain the same assistance.

MR. QUINLAN: The limit of three-fourths in value up to which the bank might make advances seemed to him too risky. As a portion of the loan was to be expended on the land under this clause in its amended form, we might well make the limit two-thirds. Financial institutions did not look on this class of security as the best, and it was the duty of the Government to stretch a point for assisting the agricultural industry. He was averse to State loans on pastoral properties in any case.

MR. HOPKINS: There was a decided difference between the Agricultural Bank lending money for pastoral purposes, and a financial institution like Dalgety & Co. lending money; because the Agricultural Bank would simply get a small return on the money lent, whereas a firm like Dalgety & Co. would act as buyer and seller in connection with the property on which the advance was made, and in that way would draw considerable profits; therefore such a company as Dalgety & Co. would be able to show a good profit on the year's transactions, whereas the Agricultural Bank could not show any such result, as it would have only one string to its bow. As to the limit of three-fourths, so long as loans were advanced on good security there was no danger in the limitation fixed by the Bill. The effect of the Bill would probably be an early reduction in the cost of foodstuffs, especially butcher's meat. About £170,000 had been applied for since the Bank commenced operations in 1896, and about £21,000 per annum would be the average, with £400 as the maximum loan in any case. If the limit of loan were increased to £1,200, we might expect to see a *pro rata* increase in the number of applications and in the amount advanced; so we might reasonably conclude that the additional amount which

was to be appropriated for the use of the Agricultural Bank would be equal to a two-years supply. Even under this Bill the total amount available to the Bank would be only £300,000, whereas in New South Wales the amount available was £500,000; in Victoria it was £2,000,000, and there the scope was certainly wider; in New South Wales the amount was £3,000,000, and in New Zealand £3,000,000. As to pastoralists in the North-West, the pioneers in that country did not reap the reward, in many cases, so he was informed, but it was rather those who came after them. Still, all the more credit to those who had succeeded in working themselves into a good financial position. Of course it was commonly said that some men had begun squatting with two horses and a good neighbour. The condition of the pastoralists in the North-West was not such as to make it necessary to offer advances to them through a State bank. He hoped the Premier's amendment of this clause would be accepted. The select committee which investigated the working of the Agricultural Bank came to the conclusion that any proposition brought forward by the present manager (Mr. Paterson) was likely to be for the best interests of the State.

MR. BUTCHER: It would not be advisable to extend the Bill to pastoral leaseholds, because a much larger total sum than that provided would then be necessary, and the limit of £1,200 as the largest loan in any case would be quite insufficient for practical purposes on a pastoral run. If the intention was to assist the squatter, it would be a bad thing for the financial institutions now making a good profit out of him. The Bill ought to be restricted to agricultural areas.

MR. MORAN: Were advances by the Agricultural Bank confined to agricultural lands in the Eastern States?

MR. HOPKINS: In New South Wales the bank advanced on leaseholds as well as freeholds.

MR. MORAN: What was considered safe in a drought-stricken country like New South Wales should not be unsafe in Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: The pastoral members did not ask that the Bill should be extended to the squatter.

MR. MORAN: Probably no one connected with large financial institutions was in favour of the Government helping the small squatter. The bank would be perfectly safe in advancing on leases in the Kimberley district, which contained the best pastoral country in Australia, drought being utterly unknown. Indeed, it would be far safer to advance on stock in the Kimberley district than on stock in the South-Western districts, where the mortality from rickets had been greater than that from tick in the North-West. The Committee were thoroughly justified in extending the benefits of the Bill to the small squatter, who might, with every safety, and with great advantage to the State, be encouraged.

MR. JACOBY: How could the squatters be supervised?

MR. MORAN: That consideration did not enter into the question. Much pastoral country was being taken up in the Leonora district; but settlers there would be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. He would not move an amendment bringing the pastoralists within the scope of the Bill, because he felt sure that such an amendment would not be carried.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The debate was becoming rather digressive. When the Bill was first introduced, it was welcomed with the reservation that in certain respects it required liberalisation. This effort of the Premier to liberalise one provision had been met in the first instance with the argument that the Government proposed to go too far, and, in the second place, with the contention that the Government ought to go still farther and include pastoralists within the scope of the Bill.

MR. MORAN: Pastoralists were included in its scope now.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; except that they came in, to a certain extent, under mixed farming. It might be advisable to grant assistance of this nature to pastoralists; but that was out of our power at the present time, simply because funds were not available for the purpose. A maximum advance of £1,200 was of no use in the development of a pastoral property. If asked to make election, so far as this Bill was concerned, between the pastoral and the agricultural industry, he would pronounce in favour of the latter, since to encourage

it meant more human beings to the acre, whilst to encourage the pastoral industry meant merely more sheep and cattle to the acre. Of course, this view restricted the argument to very narrow limits.

MR. HAYWARD: Until to-night no demand had been heard for State advances to pastoralists, though it had often been urged that the Agricultural Bank might well assist small farmers to get stock on the security of their land as well as the stock. The contention of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) that stock did not do as well in the South-West as in other parts of the State, held good in respect of cattle but not in respect of sheep. The numerous South-Western owners of small flocks of sheep did quite as well as sheep-owners in any other part of the State. With suitable encouragement, the number of sheep in the South-Western districts, which could turn out fat sheep all the year round, would soon increase largely. It was hardly possible for a South-Western farmer to make a living unless he had a few sheep.

MR. TAYLOR: The intention of the Bill was not to extend the benefits of the Agricultural Bank to the squatter or the pastoralist; otherwise the limit of borrowing would have been much higher than £1,200. Squatters required much larger advances than that if they were to be assisted by the State in developing their holdings. The most cordial feeling had always existed between the squatters and himself in the Eastern States. Queensland was one of the best pastoral countries in Australia, and during the inception of squatting in that country, from 30 per cent. in good seasons to 90 per cent. in bad seasons of the squatters were in the hands of the banks. If a Bill was brought in to assist squatting fully two millions of money would be required, whereas the measure before the House only provided for £300,000. It would be impossible to assist squatters with an amount like that. The people in the South-West went in for mixed farming. There were small men who had a hundred sheep or so, and they were able to supply the market with fat sheep all the year round. If there were not many sheep in the South-West there were lots of owners, and that was what was required in this country. It was

not the big squatter who did good. He (Mr. Taylor) had shorn sheep under a man who had half a million of sheep, but what good was that man to the country? If the half million of sheep had been distributed over a number of small squatters it would have been much better for the country. An amendment was to be moved to reduce the amount of the advance from £1,200 to £800, so that a small man would be able to borrow £800, which would give him a good start. By making the amount too high members would be assisting the big farmer, which was as undesirable as assisting the big squatter.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member (Mr. Taylor) would not assist the small squatter in the Kimberley district. We should encourage the small pastoralists in Kimberley, where the land was better, the cattle were cheaper, and the conditions more admirable than down South. It was advisable to encourage the small man to enter into competition with the big growers, so that the people of the country could get cheap meat. If the two million pounds which the member for Mount Margaret spoke of was cut up into sums of £2,000 or £5,000 and given to the small squatters it would be better for the country. The amount of the advance proposed by the Bill was far in excess of the capital that many of the pastoralists in the Kimberley district started with, and why should not the man in the Kimberley district have the same facilities offered to him as the man in the Toodyay or York district?

MR. GORDON: Too far to watch.

MR. MORAN: There could be an officer for the Kimberley district, the same as for other districts. It was lamentable that members were unwilling to allow the small man money to get a footing in the finest pastoral land of Australia, Queensland notwithstanding. He did not ask that the proposal should be limited to Kimberley or anywhere else. Let it be left to the judgment of Mr. Paterson or anybody else as to who should receive an advance. Let it be in the discretion of the bank to say whether they would advance to a legitimate applicant from Kimberley, or to an applicant from York or any other place. It was well to encourage the small sheep-farmers in the South-West; but there were sheep-

stations as well in West Kimberley. He knew of a sheep station having 100,000 sheep, and although Kimberley was not a good sheep country there were good sheep-stations there. Why should there not be small sheep-stations in the North? He knew dozens of men who had been born in the tropics, had never been outside of them, who would gladly and immediately set up in a small station on their own if they had less than what was proposed to be given by the Bill. He was not to be put off with the argument that millions of money were required to assist the pastoralists. Members should be prepared to assist that which would bring down the price of meat.

MR. BUTCHER: The member for West Perth evidently had not during his life done much squatting, or he would have spoken somewhat differently. He (Mr. Butcher) would do his best to help the small man, but he would like to see the small man who could start squatting in the North-West. No squatter up North ever did any good at all until he got into a large way. It would be impossible to live on the profits to be made out of what could be done with £1,200. It was advisable to limit the Bill to the proposals which it contained. If the Government wished to assist the squatters, a separate Bill was required. No clause of the Bill was of greater advantage to the agriculturists than the one which allowed the bank to lend money for stocking farms. There were large numbers of farms in the South and South-West which had valuable land that could be stocked, and this would decrease the price of meat. The assistance that squatters up North required from the Government was that the stock routes might be opened up, and jetties constructed so that stock could be taken to market.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. HASSELL: The clause proposed to allow too wide a margin, both in the total amount which might be lent to individuals and the limit of value. The total amount should be £800, instead of £1,200, and the value up to which an amount might be made should be two-thirds instead of three-fourths. If no

one else moved in this direction, he would himself move amendments to this effect.

MR. WALLACE moved that progress be reported, as the clause required farther consideration.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

REDISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATION.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James), in moving the second reading, said: If one approaches a question involving a change of the Constitution as a politician, the fact that one has the privilege of introducing a Bill which he believes to be necessary to meet a change occasioned by progress is a fact to be welcomed, because it is in itself an indication of very great and material growth in the prosperity of the State. But, on the other hand, to one whose sympathies lie in the direction of the constitutional lawyer rather than in the direction of the politician, any change proposed is to be deprecated unless those who introduce the change can show, by abundantly good reasons, that no other sufficient agencies exist to enable that lopping away of the mouldering branch which is the truest conservatism when it has become necessary for adapting the Constitution of yesterday to the growing needs of the State to-day. One should, whether approaching this question as a politician or as a constitutional lawyer, above all things insist that there shall be no change for change's sake, and that we are only justified in modifying the Constitution when we are clearly satisfied that the Constitution does not adequately represent and safely contain the new spirit which is abroad in the community. It is our duty, a duty which I believe presses itself on every member of this House, to make Parliament a true reflex of the matured will of the people. It is the Constitution which provides the machinery by which that will can find expression on the statute-book of the State; and not only on the statute-book of the State, but in the administration of our departments and in the administration of our laws. But in the discharge of that duty it is not for us to indulge in rude experiments: it is

not for us to rush ahead with untried theories reckless of consequences; nor on the other hand, to indulge in retrogression or to stay our hand with so much caution that mere delay becomes stagnation, and leads to changes infinitely dangerous because lacking in the exercise of foresight and discretion.

Historical Review.

Our own constitutional history in this country, although extending back some years, has not been characterised by very rapid progress. Some of the men who have seen the most significant changes in our parliamentary institutions still live with us and maintain high and responsible positions in the parliamentary life of this State. On the other hand, a great number of those who have done good work have gone to their last long rest, but have left behind them a reputation that does them honour, and makes us feel how worthily they deserved the trust that the people in days gone by placed in them. In 1831 our first Council was established by an Order-in-Council; that first Council consisted only of members of the Executive Council. In the year 1839, we find the first introduction into our parliamentary institutions of what one might call the representative element. In 1839 four nominees were appointed by the Governor to the Council; and that continued to be the position until the year 1868. From 1831 until 1868 the Council that existed, comprising as it did official members and a few representative nominee members, had comparatively little power. It had power to advise perhaps, and to suggest; but the Governor was at all times free and supreme, and all that the Council could do was perhaps to temper a gubernatorial despotism. In 1868 we find the first instance of the elective spirit in our representative body. It was then by an Order-in-Council declared that six persons should be elected, and when elected should be nominated by the Governor to take seats on the Council. Those who were elected did not, I understand, take their seats at the Council board by virtue of their election. It appeared to be a sort of recommendation by election of those who were most suitable for nomination by His Excellency. The methods of election then adopted were methods which must appeal to those

democrats who think that no rolls are ever necessary, and that every man has an inherent right to vote at the first polling-place he can strike in a day's march. The colony was roughly divided into six electorates. No roll was prepared, and any man above the age of 21 years had a right to go to the first polling-place and record his vote. I need hardly say that there was scarcely any temptation for a man to vote twice, for when he recorded his vote at a polling-place he would be known personally to the officer presiding, and the next polling-place was too distant to reach in the course of the one day's journey. As a result of that election, five members were elected. The sixth member was not elected, because the portion of the colony that ought to have elected one of the six persons a member refused to exercise the privilege conferred on it; the objection being that the privilege was not a right as it ought to be, and that the privilege was itself a mere sop to stop the agitation then growing in favour of larger and more representative institutions. Of the members who were then returned to Parliament, one was Mr. Carr, who was returned for Perth. I am personally interested in that election, because Mr. Carr was my uncle. The next was Mr. Walter Bateman, of Fremantle; the next, Mr. S. J. Phillips, the father of the present member for the Irwin; the next, Mr. J. M. Hardy; and the fifth was a man who lives to-day and maintains a high and distinguished position in this House, one who, during this long period of 34 years, has taken a most active and a most energetic interest in the parliamentary institutions of this State. I refer to our Speaker, Sir James G. Lee Steere. I believe there are few legislative institutions in Australia which have presiding over them as Speaker a man who came into the Legislative Council as one of its first elected members, and who during the intervening years has always held a seat in the House and always maintained that prominent position which he assumed on first entering it; and I rejoice to think, sir, that if I may judge from what on more than one occasion you have said you can look back over the long vista of years, and see no occasion to regret having devoted your energies and your time to calling into existence that

Assembly over which you now so ably preside. These five members were afterwards supplemented by Mr. Brockman, nominated I believe to take the place of the member who ought to have been elected by the recalcitrant electorate. These six members represented the elective principle; the other six were nominees. But although this new body had perhaps a larger moral power than its predecessors, the Governor remained, for all practical purposes, the controlling force. That was the position until the year 1870; and then, as members no doubt know, with the accession of one of the most distinguished Governors this State has ever had, the late Sir Frederick Weld, new energy was thrown into the prosecution of the agitation in favour of a larger measure of self-government, with the result that the constitution comprised in the Act of 1870 was conferred on us. By that constitution we had a body of five nominees, three of whom were official, and 10 elected representatives. Subsequently, two elective members and one nominee were added; but still the real power rested with the Governor. He was still the controlling force, and practically all that the House could do was to advise and discuss, and also to protest, as its members did on many important questions most emphatically protest, when they thought that the Governor was behaving in a manner which, in their opinion, was prejudicial to the public interests of the State. From 1870 until 1888, a period of 18 years, the Executive Council consisted entirely of officials; but in 1888 our Speaker, Sir James Lee Steere, was appointed a member of the Executive: the first unofficial member of the Executive in this State of Western Australia. One of the first members elected to the Council in 1868, you, Sir, were in 1888, 20 years after, chosen as the first unofficial member of the Executive Council of this State. The constitution conferred on us in 1870 remained until 1889.

Responsible Government, 1889.

In that year we had conferred on us those full powers of responsible government which we now enjoy. We are perhaps inclined, and too apt, to think that those who served before full political responsibility devolved on the State—with its attendant material progress—had

not thrown on their shoulders the responsibility thrown on ours, and did not have to struggle as hard as we have, or think we have, to struggle in order to secure the attainment of our parliamentary wishes, to secure what we believe to be just parliamentary representation. It is, however, refreshing—and more than refreshing, stimulating—to look back on the roll of men who were members of the Council under the old constitution, and to find that so many of those who were then prominent have since distinguished themselves under responsible government. I rejoice to think that so many of those men are still with us. Under the old system, the two Forrests made their first appearance. There was also Mr. De Hamel, who, during the short time he was leader of the Opposition under responsible government, secured a high position in the public estimation of this State. There were also our friends the present member for Beverley, Mr. Harper, and the present member for Plantagenet, Mr. Hassell, the Hon. George Randall, Mr. Silas Pearce, the late Mr. Marmion, Sir George Shenton, Mr. Septimus Burt, and again our present Speaker. There were other men in addition to these, men whom we may see now, day after day, still taking part in the parliamentary life of this country, and whose parliamentary career dates back in some instances for more than 30 and in most instances for upwards of 20 years. I do not need to refer to the long agitation which took place before the introduction of responsible government into this State. I desire only to pay my tribute of thanks to the men who in those days fought so long and so steadily for the attainment of responsible government. It is difficult for any of us to conceive the obstacles they had to overcome at a time when the population of this State was very sparse, very scattered, and when for that reason public opinion could not make itself so readily and so emphatically felt as it does at the present day. On every hand those men found their efforts thwarted by the officials, by the red tape, and by the ineptitude of the Colonial Office. It is astonishing to me that they did so much to overcome the great difficulties which had to be surmounted before responsible government was granted to this State. I hope, on the other hand, that we can say with all

confidence that those of us who since 1889 have been called on either as ordinary members of Parliament or as Ministers of the Crown to guard the interests of the people of this State, its industries and its resources, have at all events justified the trust reposed in the people of this State when responsible government was conferred. When we secured responsible government in 1889, 13 years ago, our population was 44,000 people; and our voters at the first election, in 1890, numbered less than 6,000. We began our career under responsible government with a Legislative Council of 15 members and an Assembly of 30 members, the Council being then a nominee body. That remained the position, so far as the Council was concerned, until 1893, when by the operation of a section contained in the Constitution Act the members of the Upper House ceased to be nominative and became elective. The population had at that time reached the number of 60,000 people.

Recent Changes.

The next change was made in 1896, the Legislative Council being enlarged to 24 members, and the Assembly to 44. Then came, embodied in the Constitution Amendment Act of 1899, what was perhaps the first far-reaching change made since the initiation of responsible government. By that time our population had increased to 170,000, and our electors from 6,000 to 44,000. Our Council was increased to 30 members and our Assembly to 50; and those are the conditions under which Parliament is constituted to-day, the most important alterations involved in the Constitution Amendment Act of 1899 being the adoption of three-years Parliaments and adult suffrage. Although our constitutional history does not go back for such a long period as in most other countries, no one can accuse us of having been over-hasty in the changes we have made. If since 1890 we have made greater constitutional changes than any which had been made previously, we have this fact to look back on, that our constitutional changes have never been ahead of nor lagged behind the constant and growing development of the material resources and political needs of the State. At no time can we say that a change made by any amendment of the Con-

stitution has been prematurely in advance of the time; on the contrary, we have on too many occasions been compelled to admit that, when called on to make constitutional amendments, we sometimes approached the question in a grudging spirit. Within 12 months of the time when the last amendment of the Constitution has been made, we have had forced on us again the question of still farther amendments. I am not one of those who believe that any House can achieve a measure which will give complete satisfaction: I am not one of those vain enough to think that when we have passed a Constitution Amendment Act we may look forward for even three years of political work free from clamour for farther constitutional change. Whatever Bill may be introduced, whatever Bill may be passed, we can depend on it that Bill will not have been enacted 24 hours before some people will be clamouring for an amendment of the Constitution and a redistribution of seats. Whilst at all times we must be anxious to see that our Constitution enables this House to be a true reflection of the matured opinion of the State, our duty is to check any attempt to secure amendments and changes unless those who ask for them abundantly justify the claim they put forward.

Reasons for farther Change.

A change having been made in 1899, why should we change now? In 1899, three short years ago, our population numbered 170,000 odd: to-day it numbers 218,464. There is an increase of upwards of 40,000 inhabitants. Our electors have increased in number from 44,000 in 1899 to 106,000 at the present day. Now, members must bear in mind that the Constitution Amendment Act of 1899 was based on the voting strength and voting power at that time of the community. The voting strength then stood at 44,000 electors, and I put it to the House: where one finds so great, so enormous a change in the course of three years, is not the presumption extremely strong that an Act which, when it was framed, was held to be suitable for the purpose of meeting the wishes and reflecting the views of 44,000 electors, fails to discharge adequately that duty in relation to the increased number of 106,000 electors? Not only

has there been this increase in the electoral strength of the State, but on all hands one sees signs of progress and signs of development. Test the question by any standard. How is our revenue proceeding? How does land settlement extend? How is the gold industry developing? How are all our industries growing on every hand? There is abundant testimony that this State of Western Australia is to-day, in the year 1902, a distinctly different State from what it was in the year 1899. The change in the number of electors alone calls on us to consider very seriously whether an Act passed in 1899 to meet the views of 44,000 electors can and does meet the needs of 106,000 electors. I submit that our constitution must move and must expand with the people, and that it must also move and expand with territorial development. Applying these tests, not only has our population increased enormously, not only has our material prosperity increased, but almost new territories are being, mile by mile, added to the State year after year, and the relative importance of those portions of the State is rapidly changing. During the last five years some portions have developed at a much greater rate than any other portions, and at so much greater rate that those who live in the more thriving and prosperous portions have a right to call on us to readjust the state of affairs which exists and which gives to those who have progressed less freely and vigorously an equal if not sometimes a greater power than others who have made better use of the opportunities available to them. Our duty is as far as possible to meet and satisfy the reasonable requirements of the people of the State.

Economical Aspect.

We shall not do that if we approach the question with any view of false economy. I am not one of those who think that the members of this Parliament, or the mere number of the members, make for extravagance. I see no trace of extravagance in the surroundings in which members of this Parliament live. We are, without exception, the most plainly housed Parliament in Australia. We have none of those encouragements to extravagance which exist elsewhere, nor do we live in that

atmosphere of luxury in which some of our more favoured Eastern parliamentary brethren live. In this State, I believe a member costs not more than £300 a year. If we take the salary and the privilege of the railway pass, the extra printing, and the extra parliamentary expenses involved on account of his being a member of the House, I am well within the mark when I say no one member of the House costs the State so much as £300 a year. If we bear that in mind it will lessen indeed the force of the argument which is used by people outside the House, who contend that on account of economy there needs to be a serious reduction in the membership of the House. I believe in no such thing. I do not think we ought to approach the question with the economical idea that is prevalent. My desire is to approach the question of redistribution so that we can obtain inside the House the best adequate representation of the people, the best adequate representation of the interests and the territory of the State. It is redistribution as the main factor, not reduction. If the members will approach the question in that spirit and ask, how can we secure adequate redistribution and retain the members as they are to-day? I think they will join with me in saying it is impossible to secure redistribution, under present circumstances, unless we either increase or diminish. In my opinion, members cannot be retained at their present number without failing to secure that adequate redistribution the country has a right to expect from us. For that reason the Government have decided that, there being at present only two courses open by which redistribution can be effected, namely by increasing or reducing members, to accept the latter alternative and secure redistribution by reduction, using the reduction only as a means to an end, and that end being redistribution.

Basis of Redistribution.

In approaching the question of redistribution I apply the same principles on which we should deal with any similar question where we are called on to consider the number of members of Parliament. We have to bear in mind that any individual or any Parliament or any Government that has to face a

question like this in Western Australia can adopt, and if we like to be academical can push to its logical extreme, one of three principles, that principle which insists that representation shall depend entirely on population, that principle which asks that representation shall be dependent on interests, and that party which puts forward the claim that representation shall be dependent on territory. These are the three conflicting principles one always hears urged with logical insistence on questions like this by the respective advocates. I desire to impress on members that here in Western Australia this Parliament and the Government have intrusted to them the destinies of an enormous territory. We are apt, because we have lived so long perhaps in Western Australia and because our population is small, to turn to the Eastern States where they have large centres of population, and in contemplation of that fact to think that in Western Australia we are a small State because we are not a populous community. Yet, if one looks at the map and is impressed by the facts which that perusal ought to bring home, one cannot help feeling that this Parliament has within its power and control the future development and destinies of the most important State in the Commonwealth of Australia. Nor is there any State whose development is less advanced than the State of Western Australia, nor any State where there is greater need for firmness at the hands of members of Parliament, nor greater need for confidence in the future of the State. Are we to say, because to-day there may be in the vast stretch of country a few centres around which population clings, that for all time power is to rest with those living in the populous centres? Are we not to have confidence in the future and look forward with a certain hope that if there be those populous centres, in the course of a few years there will be a still greater number of populous centres? And depend upon it, if we by adopting false principles, because any one of these three principles is false if carried to extremes, use our energies to place too great a power in the hands of populous centres or in territory or in interests, we shall carry out in relation to the State that principle of electoral centralisation which

the people complain so bitterly of when applied in other directions. It is because in this State we have an enormous territory, we should all give great weight to the fact that territory itself does require some adequate representation in the State, because inside the territorial line lie resources which would never be adequately developed unless there are people who on behalf of the few living inside these territorial areas have the right to bring their desires and wants before Parliament and the people of the State. Depend upon it, if we seek to secure in Western Australia an extended development of our territory, we must do all we possibly can to let that territory not only be known through the Press, or by reason of its resources, but we must let those who live here and are slowly doing good work for the State feel that we know and adequately realise their value, and are so anxious to promote their development that we confer upon them the privilege of returning members to Parliament to an extent beyond which their population alone would warrant. There is always this great difference between populous centres and small and scattered ones. The small and scattered electorate can only make its voice heard through its member in Parliament. The populous electorate could, without members, by virtue of the Press and the agitations which so rapidly spring up in populous centres, exercise far more influence in the Parliament of the State than country districts would if they had representation and the populous centres had none. I really believe that if to-morrow we had a House which was so largely elected on territorial lines that the effect of it was that territory would control in the House a majority of votes, the indirect power which is always exerted in populous centres by their Press and the ease with which public meetings are held, would exercise far more influence in the House than the wishes of the electors of the members, even although a majority might be returned by the territorial areas and not by the populous centres. Those of us who believe that population should have and must have adequate representation in the House will, I believe, also realise that the areas small in population and greater in territorial size have special claim on us.

Present Assembly, how classified.

At the present time we have a House of 50 members. I take the House, and I suggest the following to members as being a fair analysis of it, namely as containing four pastoral members, 15 agricultural members, 15 mining members, 13 metropolitan members—including in that Perth and suburbs, Fremantle and suburbs, and Guildford—and Ports three members; making a House of 50 members made up of those classes. The figures I take now are based on the census recorded in March, 1901. Since that date the increase in adults has been, approximately, 18,000. It must also be borne in mind in connection with the figures placed before members that they are based on the condition of affairs existing in March, 1901, since which date there has been an increase in population of adults as just mentioned. Of our pastoral districts, we have Gascoyne 593 voters, East Kimberley 179, West Kimberley 345, Roebourne 308, making a total of 1,425 voters who return four members, or an average of one member for 356 votes. Then I classify the agricultural electorates at present as follow:—Beverley, 874; Greenough, 796; Irwin, 532; Moore, 740; Murchison, 586; Murray, 2,070; Northam, 2,481; Plantagenet, 1,315; Sussex, 1,065; Swan, 1,788; Toodyay, 1,153; Wellington, 1,716; Williams, 1,408; York, 1,248; and Nelson, 678; giving for the 15 members a total voting power of 18,450 votes, or an average of about 1,200 electors per member. Mining I fix at 15 members as follows:—Boulder, 2,896; Mount Burges, 2,919; Coolgardie, 2,586; Cue, 1,608; Dundas, 1,810; Hannans, 9,856; Kalgoorlie, 4,576; Kanowna, 2,902; Menzies, 3,186; Magnet, 1,602; Margaret, 4,715; North Murchison, 999; Pilbara, 927; South-West Mining, 1,720; Yilgarn, 955; giving 15 seats for a total of 43,257 voters, or an average of 2,880 voters per member. In Perth and suburbs, we have Perth 3,142, East Perth 3,177, North Perth 5,787, and South Perth, West Perth, Subiaco, and Claremont; giving a total of seven seats for 24,000 odd voters, or an average of 3,400 voters per member. In Fremantle and suburbs there are Cockburn Sound, Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, and South Fremantle; five seats for 12,160

voters, or an average of 2,400 voters per member. Guildford has 2,368 voters, and the ports comprise Albany 1,864, Geraldton 1,322, Bunbury 1,499, giving three seats for 4,685 voters, or an average of 1,560 per member. That is the position to-day; and so far as I have been able to examine them that is a fair classification of the electorates of this House as represented by their present members. The classification shows this average: for pastoral, about 400 votes per member; agricultural, 1,200 votes per member; mining, 2,900 votes per member; Perth, 3,400 votes per member; Fremantle, 2,400 votes per member; and the Ports, 1,560 votes per member. On that basis, as it stands to-day, the electorates around Perth come out best. But it must be borne in mind that Perth, Fremantle, and Guildford should be taken together, and aggregated as a metropolitan area; and that is how I propose to deal with them in discussing the redistribution proposed in the Bill before members, who themselves will see, when they check the figures by reference to the printed return presented, that in the agricultural districts the numbers run from Nelson with 678, to Northam with 2,481. The mining districts range from Pilbarra with 927 to Hannans with 9,856. In Perth, the variations run from North Perth with 5,700, to South Perth with 1,500. Fremantle varies from Cockburn Sound with 1,200, to East Fremantle with 3,700. If we therefore take the classification I have laid before the House as being a fair classification of the various interests—pastoral, mining, metropolitan, and agricultural, we shall find in each division very great disparities between the smallest and the largest electorate. Every one of them, with the exception, perhaps, of the pastoral, shows on the face of it, as it stands to-day, an urgent need for redistribution; so that within themselves, quite apart from the consideration of one competing interest against another, there is to-day a need for a redistribution of power. We have such an anomaly as this: Hannans electorate contains 9,856 votes, and East Kimberley 179. One electorate has nearly 10,000 votes; the other has less than 200.

Disparities in the Representation.

It must be borne in mind that whatever redistribution we effect, we are bound to have disparities, and very glaring disparities, between the representation of the pastoral industry of the North and that of the more populous centres. But it is obvious that a disparity so great as this is I think much greater than we have a right to retain on our statute-book, much greater than we can reasonably expect those who happen to live at Hannaus, and to be electors there, to submit to if it can be altered. It is, I maintain, such gross and glaring disparities which cause so much agitation and unrest. When the Constitution Bill was introduced in 1899, members will no doubt recollect that the two Kimberleys were thrown together; but at the last moment they were revived as separate electorates. It was pointed out at the time that this was a foolish step, because the fact that the two Kimberleys were kept with such a small number of electors would be seized on by everyone in the State who thought there ought to be a redistribution, and would be made a very strong ground on which redistribution could be urged. And in the report of every discussion that has arisen in connection with this question will be found that instance of East Kimberley, with 170 voters, returning a member to Parliament, while several other electorates have thousands of voters and only the same parliamentary strength. A farther disparity arises, and perhaps always will arise, inasmuch as in the more populous centres the percentage of those who vote is much greater than the percentage of those who do not. But there must always be a much greater percentage of non-voters in the more scattered areas. For instance, we have in East Kimberley an electorate of less than 200 voters; there was at the last general election a very heated contest, Mr. Connor being returned by one vote, and the votes polled totalling 63. The ordinary man in the street judges the result, not by what he sees in the electoral rolls, if he ever sees them, but by what he sees in the newspaper after the election is over. And if he finds as the result of a warmly-contested election that one candidate received 31 votes and the other 32, it is these numbers that are impressed on his mind, and he

cannot help asking the question: how can it happen, under any Constitution which professes to be fair, that 32 men can return a member to Parliament while 9,800 have only the same right? In dealing with the agricultural electorates under our present Constitution, I have included Murray, Wellington, and Plantagenet. Those three are extremely doubtful agricultural votes. Murray and Wellington are in the position—and I think it is the position of Plantagenet also—that there is within each of them a large timber vote, so that it is impossible to say before an election is held whether the man who represents the timber employees, or he who represents the farmers, will be returned. I much question whether, if a contest arose to-day in any of those three electorates, between a man who had the unanimous support of the timber employees and one equally well supported by the farmers, the timber representative would not get in. Personally, I believe he would. We have to-day Mr. Atkins as member for the Murray, and we know he got in by a comparatively few votes; yet he is a man who had, as it were, a special right to appeal to a great number of those electors who would have been in the ordinary sense bound by their obligation to their Labour nominee. But even he, having if not special claims on their votes a special claim that they should not unduly press their opposition, succeeded in getting in by only a comparatively small majority. In connection with those three electorates, there is always the difficulty that while they remain as they now are, no member returned can give satisfaction. The man sent in by the timber vote will never satisfy the farmers, however good a representative he may be, however diligent in the discharge of his duty; and the same observation applies exactly to the man who may be returned by the farmers. However good his work, he will never give satisfaction to the timber employees. So the consequence is, the member returned for any of those three constituencies finds himself in an extremely false position. I have, however, for the present put them down as farmers' votes, because their present members have agricultural sympathies; at all events, they do not occupy seats on the Labour bench, as

they would if returned by the pure timber vote. To that extent, therefore, the classification I have made, which allows 15 votes to agriculture, gives perhaps a greater power than agriculture really exerts in the present House, if the question were tested. Next, take our metropolitan area, and we find South Perth, a small electorate; Cockburn Sound, a small electorate; North Fremantle, a small electorate. Take the mining areas, and we find North Murchison, a small electorate; Magnet, a small electorate; Dundas, a small electorate; and Yilgarn, a small electorate. All these are small electorates when compared with other electorates of the same class, whether metropolitan or mining electorates.

To remove Anomalies by Reduction.

Now if we sought to remove those anomalies by any means other than reduction, we should have to remove them by an increase. Nothing could be done by keeping the numbers as they stand to-day. We can achieve our end by a reduction only. The difficulty must be solved, not by lowering the number of electors per member, but by increasing on the whole the number of electors per member; and in favour of that there is this great argument to be used: in all the States there has been too great a tendency unduly to increase the Houses. The Australian Houses to-day are, I submit, far too large for the number of electors; and that disproportion has arisen imperceptibly, because when population was comparatively small, the number of members was declared by the Constitution Act. The Government and the people, as a result, struck an average from that; and so as the population increased year after year and decade after decade, we find the membership has been increased on the assumption that the quota first adopted was the correct quota; Governments not realising that the proper method of dealing with the question was to increase the quota as the population increased. Now we find a great tendency is growing in the East towards the adoption of better methods, and not to say, as has been said in the past, that because 20 years ago 2,000 men returned a member, to-day 2,000 men shall also return a member; but to say that

as population increases, and our centres become more thickly peopled, while the membership may be increased, it should not increase in the same ratio as the population. If members turn to the third page of the return before them, they will find how the Government propose to reduce the House to 47. Let me again say, the number is not lessened by way of reduction, but by way of redistribution. The reduction is being made, not for the purpose of securing any so-called economy, but to secure an efficient House. It is far more valuable than the economy which would be effected by an undue reduction. In dealing with any question of reduction, you have always to bear in mind that in any Parliament in Australia where party government has been carried on, or is being carried on, or where phases of it may remain for some years, you may reduce your members by too great a number. You have in your House a certain number of Ministers. You have here five; you have the Speaker, six; you have the Government whip, seven; you have on the front Opposition benches five; making a total of 12. Those 12 are men who are not so free as independent members are. The men who hold office naturally look upon their views and acts as being right, and you have five men in Opposition who want to get into office, and who naturally think the five Ministers' views and acts are wrong. It should be particularly borne in mind in dealing with this question of reduction that in this House, where we have 50, we have no less than 12 members who are not free. I use the word in no offensive sense, because I apply it to myself. They are not free for the reasons I have given. If you take away 12, how many are left in our present House? Only 38; that is, 38 really have to carry on the duty of responsible government in its truest sense and to judge between Ministry and Opposition. They are the independent benches by whom the Government or the Opposition must be judged. Objections have very often been raised, indeed always have been raised, about the danger of getting a House of Parliament consisting of "placemen." May we not somewhat incur those dangers, if we decrease the House so unduly that the 12 I have mentioned may be an undue proportion of the total number of mem-

bers of Parliament? I very much doubt whether, if we reduce this House much below 47, the risks I have suggested would not be real and tangible ones. I know that in South Australia the number has been reduced to 44. With all due respect to them, I very much question the wisdom of it, and I venture to think that the result was made more out of a desire to secure economy than out of a desire to secure efficiency in the Parliament of the State. [MR. DAGLISH: To secure votes.] In those 47 we have mining, 15—they suffer no reduction; agriculture, 12; metropolitan, 13; pastoral, 3; ports, 3; timber, 1, making 47.

Population, Area, Interest, how to be treated.

We recognise population in populous centres, and area and interest where population is scarce, and in each group we desire to secure as far as we possibly can fairly equal representation. I should like to indicate to members how I propose to secure that object. In mining we have 45,000 votes. We propose to amend the boundaries where they must be amended in certain cases, and to increase the number of members; not the total number of members, but increase the numbers in certain areas by redistribution. Members perhaps have not had time to follow the Redistribution of Seats Bill which was placed before them to-night. That Bill deals with boundaries. I will refer now to mining members, provided for in this new Bill. The number will be 15, consisting of Boulder, 3,359; Coolgardie, 2,586; Murchison, 2,607; Dundas, 1,848; Hannans, 3,667; Ivanhoe, 3,451; Trafalgar, 3,731; Kalgoorlie, 3,550; Kanowna, 3,502; Menzies, 3,186; Yilgarn, 3,274; Magnet, 2,802; Margaret, 3,515; Pilbarra, 927; Collie, 1,296. That gives an average of about 2,900 voters for each member. Members will see that North Murchison has disappeared, and Southern Cross has disappeared, that is the present Yilgarn. The present Yilgarn has been added to Mt. Burges, but we retain the name Yilgarn, because it is the name of the first goldfield and the first mining electorate in the State. North Murchison has been added to Cue, and the electorate called Murchison. The two electorates which have disappeared have been added to populous centres around

Kalgoorlie, and are called Ivanhoe and Trafalgar, containing 3,451 and 3,731. We secure by these means a more equal distribution in the mining centres. The average, of course, on the goldfields is largely reduced by the small electorates of Pilbarra and Collie. Pilbarra, however, is clearly a mining electorate. Of course it includes an area of pastoral country, but the determining factor there is the mining industry. The mining vote controls it. It is essentially a mining electorate, and it must therefore be classified with the mining electorates, although it has the small number of 927. You cannot classify it as pastoral. It is not pastoral—it is essentially mining; and it is an electorate which deserves special representation, because it has special mining interests. Then in the agricultural, we provide for 12 seats. There are Beverley, 1,000; Greenough, 1,158; Irwin, 1,270; Murray, 1,563; Northam, 2,505; Sussex, 1,065; Swan, 1,788; Toodyay, 1,129; Wellington, 1,069; the Williams, 1,684; York, 1,242; Nelson, 1,078; making a total of 16,500, and giving an average of about 1,400 voters per member. In that redistribution the Murchison is gone, the Moore is gone, and Plantagenet is gone. The Murchison is divided. Most of it goes into Greenough, but the northern portion is added to Gascoyne. The Moore and the Irwin are combined; and, as to Plantagenet, part of it is given to the Williams, part to Dundas, and the balance goes into the timber electorate and to Albany. Although the agricultural electorates on this list are reduced to 12, it must be borne in mind that these are now made what one can safely call 12 safe agricultural seats. [MR. TAYLOR: Safe agricultural seats!] I see no occasion to laugh. I should be sorry to see the time when there were not safe agricultural seats in this House. They are, under our proposal, free from the element one finds existing now in the three electorates I have previously mentioned; elements which should never be in any electorate to such an extreme, the position being such that no man who represents either of the two can satisfy both.

MR. MORAN: You get that in all big electorates.

THE PREMIER: There is no big electorate where you get it.

MR. HOPKINS: What about Kalgoorlie?

MR. MORAN: What about East Perth and West Perth?

THE PREMIER: You find those unmixable elements in no other place. You go to Kalgoorlie, West Perth, and East Perth, and you find the various phases of political feeling within each electorate gradually merging. You do not find a strong line of demarcation between a certain class of electors on the one hand, and a certain class of electors on the other. You do not see in any other electorates of this State the strong demarcation that you see in these three I have mentioned, and the extreme contrasts are the stronger for the reason that on each election it is a very great question which is the stronger element of the two. No one can hold his seat confident in the belief, as a man ought to be, that if he does his duty and works well, he will secure the confidence of the majority, but on the contrary, when he goes back there will be half of the electors who will be displeased with him, whatever he does to discharge his duty. In the metropolitan area we have Perth, 3,000 odd; East Perth, 3,848; North Perth, 3,842; South Perth, 1,560; West Perth, 3,951; Balcatta, 3,010; Subiaco, 2,276; Claremont, 2,268; Fremantle, 3,394; East Fremantle, 2,616; South Fremantle, 3,560; North Fremantle, 1,691; Guildford, 2,368; giving a total of 37,500 votes, or an average of 2,900, practically the same average as that disclosed by the goldfields. Cockburn Sound has disappeared, and been replaced by Balcatta. Balcatta comprises a portion of Leederville, a portion of North Perth electorate, and a portion of West Perth. It is an additional electorate to Perth. I have taken the name of Balcatta as being the native name of the district. In the pastoral there are three electorates, these being Gascoyne, 750; Kimberley, 524; and Roebourne, 550: making a total of 1,824, and giving an average of 600. I am prepared to admit readily that members can attack that. It is open to strong comment that we are providing for three members for the pastoral industry in this State, with a total of less than 2,000 voters. But I hope the House will agree with it, because none of us can foresee what will be the future development of that portion of the State. There was a time when the southern portion of Western Aus-

tralia was dependent upon the progress and development of the north. There was a time when we in the south looked with apprehension on the suggestion that some day there might be separation between the north and the south. The tables now are turned, and we have enjoyed prosperity while they have been going through years of drought. I look forward with confidence, however, to increased development and prosperity of the northern portions of our State; portions so full of possibilities that the last thing we should do is to minimise their value by unduly curtailing their representation in the House; and if we bear in mind the enormous territory, and that there exists an area of pastoral country which for sheep and cattle will prove, I believe, as the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) represented to-night, the best pastoral portion of Australia, because free of drought, we can safely anticipate that the next few years should show greater development in that portion of our country north of Sharks Bay than there has been for the last twenty years. Moreover, one never knows what may be the mineral development in that portion of the State. In our ports we have Bunbury with 1,499 electors, Geraldton with 1,539, and Albany with 2,226.

New Electorates.

We come to a new electorate; and in connection with that new electorate I admit we are faced with a difficult problem, one which it is very hard to know how to satisfactorily settle. There is in the Murray, and in the Wellington, and in the Plantagenet electorates a very large timber vote—a vote which is almost entirely a labour vote; and this labour vote is planted right in the middle of agricultural constituencies. I have already pointed out how undesirable that is, whether from the point of view of the agriculturist or from the point of view of the timber employee; because no man returned for such a district can do justice to the whole of his constituents, or even to a bare majority of them. There is a large body of timber voters at Jarrahdale, there are large bodies at Waroona, Yarloop, and Mornington, and then proceeding southward and including the mills on the Collie line there is another body of them at Denmark. At the last-mentioned

place there are about 400 timber voters. The existing electorate of Plantagenet has, roughly, 1,300 voters, of whom 400 are timber voters. Now, an agricultural electorate composed of 1,300 voters scattered over an enormous territory such as Plantagenet, and with 400 of those voters solid in one spot, must be controlled by those 400 voters if they go in one body and record their votes. As I said previously, it is very difficult to say whether Plantagenet, Wellington, and the Murray, as they stand to-day, are agricultural electorates or not. They are certainly most unsatisfactory seats, whether judged from the point of view of the agriculturist or that of the timber employee. The only way to overcome the difficulty is to take out those who represent the timber interest; and so we propose to take the whole of the timber interests and include them in one electorate. So far as Forrest No. 1 and Forrest No. 2 are concerned, there is no difficulty, since they extend over a much less area than do many other electorates, and the man who wishes to stand for them has to speak only at certain recognised centres; but then there is a difficulty because of the distance which separates Denmark, representing Forrest No. 3, from Mornington, Yarloop, Waroona, and Jarrahdale. However, I desire hon. members to ask themselves first of all this question: is it desirable that the timber interest should be mixed up with the agricultural or any other interest? If we take the timber interest right out of the Murray and the Wellington districts and give it a separate vote, do not all the reasons point inevitably to including the timber interest represented by the Denmark mills with the other timber interests and giving those timber interests one seat? And what will be the result? After all, the result will be simply that the timber electorate will return a direct Labour representative. The vote, no doubt, would be a purely Labour vote. So far as the agriculturists are concerned, the creation of the new electorate puts them in no worse position; it may put them in a better position.

MR. MORAN: It dishes the Labour party, anyhow.

THE PREMIER: I see no means of overcoming the difficulty except that of

adding Denmark, as Forrest No. 3, to the other timber interests, namely Forrest No. 1 and Forrest No. 2.

MR. MORAN: Couldn't you cut the Labour vote out of West Perth?

THE PREMIER: I do not think there is much of a Labour vote in West Perth. Applying these tests, we have mining with 15 votes, and we have metropolitan and other populous centres with 14 votes, making a total of 29. These 29 votes are given to the areas which have a right to representation according to population. Against that, we have 12 agricultural and three pastoral seats, or a total of 15. Farther, we have three seaport electorates: Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton. I think we may call these electorates composite, being neither one thing nor the other. So that in the redistribution here proposed, the position as it obtains in the present House still remains, but with a much stronger relative strength to populous centres. If the members representing populous centres like to combine, they can control the House: it is only a question of their combining. It cannot be expected that any one portion or class of the populous centres should alone dominate the House. Therefore, when people say that the popular will must control, the answer is that the popular will does control, when the members who represent populous centres combine against those members who do not. It rests entirely with the men who are sent to Parliament. The classification therefore represents a clear and effective recognition of the right of populous centres, when unanimous, to control. Before passing away from this point, I should like to refer to the name "Forrest," which I hear some member on the Opposition side criticising from an etymological standpoint. That electorate I have called after Sir John Forrest—[MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—because I think so deserved a tribute may well be paid him. The name appears particularly fitting, except perhaps to the few hypercritical gentlemen who object to its spelling.

MR. MORAN: Call the electorate "Sir John Forrest," to please the Labour vote!

THE PREMIER: No. I shall call it "Forrest," because the right honourable bearer of that name often claimed to be the great democratic leader of this State.

MR. JACOBY: Is the name a pun?

THE PREMIER: No; it is not a pun.

Population a controlling force.

I should like to point out to those members who think population should not have a controlling force in the House, and who are often heard to speak in favour of reduction of membership on the ground of economy, that the more we reduce our number the greater is the relative power placed in populous centres; though it is not populous centres that are calling for reduction. Every reduction carried out means a greater loss in small electorates, and therefore a greater relative power in the large electorates. If to-morrow we reduced the House to 45, we should have the populous centres exercising still greater power than they exercise with a membership of 47; and if we reduced the number of this House to 42, the same defect would be emphasised. I ask those members who think that severe reductions should be made to bear in mind that every reduction they make will, and must, play into the hands of the populous centres by giving increased power to those centres. I am sorry to have detained the House on this point, but I have dealt with it because it is most important. I should like now to refer shortly to the relative membership of the Lower House and the average number of electors in the other States. In Queensland, the Assembly has 72 members and 97,000 electors, averaging 1,400 electors per seat. The New South Wales Assembly consists of 125 members, elected by 318,000 voters, or an average of about 2,500 voters per seat. The Victorian Assembly at present numbers 95 members, who are elected by 257,000 voters. Tasmania has an Assembly of 38 members, elected by 41,000 voters. The South Australian Assembly consists of 42 members, representing 154,000 voters. Here in Western Australia we propose an Assembly of 47 members, elected by 106,000 voters. The number of voters, 106,000, will of course be considerably increased when the rolls have been made up and the full benefit of the increase in population which has taken place since March, 1901, is felt. In connection with that increase in population, I wish to state my belief that the increase will be found to have affected the Perth and

Fremantle electorates more largely than any others. I believe that in the course of a year or two the Perth electorates will be by far the strongest numerically in the State.

MR. HOPKINS: That is only supposition?

THE PREMIER: Yes. I believe it will be found so, and I think it ought to be so. As a matter of fact, our average of voters per seat throughout the State will be about 2,000, which is higher than the average in some Eastern States; and our average would appear much higher, except for the number of pastoral seats.

MR. HOPKINS: I observe that the average for the Perth seats is less than the average for Kalgoorlie and Boulder seats.

THE PREMIER: I am afraid the hon. member has not been listening: it is about the same if we include the new electorates.

MR. HOPKINS: Add the numbers up, and see.

Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER: So far as our Upper House is concerned, we propose by this Bill to reduce the number of provinces to eight, and to give each province three representatives, making a total membership of 24. A glance at the map will show hon. members that the existing 10 provinces have been delimited in utterly haphazard fashion and do not appear to represent any particular interest. Though it is undoubtedly difficult so to work out provinces that each province shall be in the nature of a homogeneous electorate, that end can be approximated much more closely than under the present system. We propose to give two provinces to the goldfields, one to Perth, one to Fremantle, one to the pastoral industry, and three to the agricultural industry. That basis of subdivision gives the pastoral and agricultural industries four provinces, or an exact half of the whole number. The populous provinces will have 12 members, whilst the agricultural and pastoral provinces will also have 12; and I consider that by the system of redistribution adopted we provide a grouping of electorates under which expansion can go on without necessitating alteration of boundaries.

The goldfields are given the East and North-East Provinces. Taking the West, Central, South, and South-West Provinces, hon. members will find, on examination, that inside the areas of those provinces there can be any amount of expansion and development on very much the same lines as at present. Hon. members will not find part of a province agricultural, part pastoral, and part mining. At present we have 30 members in the Upper House and 50 in the Lower. With the utmost respect to the Legislative Council, I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that that body has too many members, and that it should never have had so many. That it has so many—we know exactly how it happened—is due to the fact that when the Constitution Act Amendment Bill was to pass in 1899, it was necessary to get some more populous representation in the Upper House; and when we sought to get populous representation in one electorate, the representation of other electorates had to be increased. The New South Wales Legislative Council, which is nominee, consists of 65 members as against 125 members in the Legislative Assembly; roughly speaking, the proportion is one to two. In Victoria, the Council consists of 48 members and the Assembly of 95: but the Constitution Act Amendment Bill now before the Victorian Parliament provides for a Legislative Council numbering 28 and an Assembly numbering 56. Thus, it appears that Victoria proposes to recognise the proportion adopted in the Federal Constitution of an Upper House just half the number of the Lower House. In South Australia the Council consists of 18 members and the Assembly of 42, whilst in Tasmania the Council has 19 members to the Assembly's 38. In Queensland the Assembly numbers 72 members against 38 in the Council. I therefore submit with the utmost respect that a membership of 24 is ample for the Legislative Council of this State. There is all the strength that is needed in 24 members. If Victoria is satisfied with a Legislative Council of 28—there can be little doubt, after the recent general elections, that 28 will be the number approved of—and if South Australia is satisfied with 18, surely our Legislative Council cannot consider that we are taking from their

dignity by asking them to reduce their number to 24.

MR. MORAN: You said 21 before.

THE PREMIER: I think so still, but I hope the Upper House will accept 24. I think a small body of men will really exercise a greater degree of influence and power than a large body. Members will see that, so far as the Upper House is concerned, the qualification will remain the same. So far as the Lower House is concerned that also remains the same; but proxy voting is not allowed. Proxy voting can be carried on in connection with the Upper House. We recognise that the Upper House is a property House and should be retained as such, and we must loyally recognise that. It is because it is a property House that some members think it ought to be abolished. Whether it ought to be abolished or not, whilst it stands as it is let us admit the fact that it is a property House and must be based on property representation.

Relations of the two Houses.

As our Lower House becomes so much more populous, and year after year representation to population is larger, whilst the Council continues a purely property House, we are bound sooner or later to have difficulties cropping up between the two Houses. We cannot expect to go on with the smooth working which has characterised the past, nor is it likely that we should do so, because in the future we shall be brought face to face with problems and difficulties about which there will be far more opposition than has been the case in the past. Matters in the past have largely consisted of a public works policy; but as we have cast on our shoulders the responsibility of carrying out social legislation and domestic reform, these are questions on which the Lower House may, and most probably will, come in conflict with the Upper House. If we deal with a question for instance like liquor reform, and this House takes up the attitude which a certain class of the community may think, and honestly think, amounts to confiscation, if for example by legislation we fixed a certain time after which licensees shall have no moral right to renewal, another Chamber might take up the position that this legislation means

confiscating the rights, or the reasonable expectations, that exist now. There are dozens of different ways of dealing with the liquor problem, and there are also many other questions where naturally there will be a cleavage between the two Houses. The question of finance is one that may come up very largely here, and very likely there may be a difficulty on the question of taxation.)

We must anticipate that most probably there will be difficulties in the future, and by the Constitution Bill we should anticipate and fairly prevent constitutional difficulties from arising. Provisions for difficulties of this nature are found in the Federal Constitution Act, and we provide in this Bill on very much the same lines. I will not refer to the provisions contained in detail: members can look at these for themselves, in clause 59.) Generally the principle is this: if a Bill is sent up to the Upper House and rejected, and if the next session it is again sent up and rejected, and there is then a dissolution of the Assembly and the Bill is rejected, there can then be a dissolution of both Houses, and if the Bill is then rejected there may be a joint sitting and a decision come to by a three-fifths majority. Members will see there is in a case like that a very severe penalty on this House. It puts the clause in motion, and members can dissolve the House themselves if their wishes are thwarted. We make a provision by which members in this House cannot use that provision on the eve of a general election. There must be a period between such an election and the extraordinary joint dissolution. I do not urge that provision alone because it will save difficulty in the future, but I urge it on the House and on the Council, and upon the electors of the State, because it will place on the shoulders of members of Parliament a greater sense of their responsibility than exists now. At present the accusation is made against this House, rightly or wrongly I do not say, but the same accusation is brought against Lower Houses elsewhere, that measures are brought forward which members say they want carried, knowing all the time that the Upper House will reject them. That is an accusation which is brought against us, and a great number of people believe that the Lower House is wanting in its responsibility

because it shirks many things, and puts the responsibility on the other House. Under this proposed system the Lower House cannot shirk its responsibility. If it thinks a Bill is of importance, members must either drop it or go to the country. If this law is enforced, everyone in this House will realise that we must either leave the Bill and thus stultify ourselves, or have a dissolution. It will not then be sufficient to go to the electors and say, "I believe in the Bill; we ought to have that Bill; but the other House would not have it;" the responsibility will rest on the House, and members will be responsible if the Bill is not passed, because it is within their power to pass the Bill or have the House dissolved. If we place that provision in the Bill, I think it will give a greater sense of responsibility to members of the House. It will improve our working and our status in the eyes of the people, and perhaps, bit by bit, make us worthy in the future for that position when we shall be able to do all the Parliamentary work in one Chamber.

Reduction of Ministers.

Members will see that we provide for a reduction of Ministers from six to five. I believe five Ministers will be sufficient to do the work when things are in smooth working order. If we had five Ministers now I think they would be overworked. I do not think there should be less than five Ministers. In South Australia they have four, but I do not think I shall be destroying any confidence if I express the opinion of the Attorney-General, Mr. J. H. Gordon, one of the ablest men there, who says that that number is too small, and that five is the smallest number to comprise a Government. The difficulty arose in South Australia in this way. The Government proposed five Ministers: this was opposed by the economists and by those who opposed the whole scheme of constitutional amendment, and these combined and suggested four Ministers, knowing that in doing so they would get the votes of those who opposed reform and also the votes of the economists. They had a combination, and the Government had either to accept four or lose the Bill. To the utter discomfiture of those who proposed the amendment, the

Government accepted it, and the Government are trying their best to do with four Ministers. I am confident it was unwise. If it was unwise there, it is more unwise where there is so much work as there is in Western Australia, where I do not think we could do with less than five Ministers. I think when things are in smooth working order five will be able to do the work.

Minister in charge of a Bill.

Members will notice that there is a clause which provides that the Minister in charge of a Bill has the right to speak in either House in connection with that Bill. This is dealt with in Clause 58. That is a provision which will commend itself to members. It does seem absurd that if a Bill is introduced into this House by a Minister who knows exactly what the Bill is required for, and the arguments in its favour, he should not have the right to go to the Council and place before that body the arguments which he has placed before this House and on which he has obtained the concurrence of this House. The same will apply also to the Minister for Lands in the other House. He will be able to place his views before the Council, and then will have the right to come down here and explain a Bill. No private member will be able to do that. We cannot ask a private member to go into the Council. A Minister of this House will have no right to vote in the Upper House. He can only explain the Bill. One cannot take hold of a Bill and explain it unless one has the detailed knowledge which it takes sometimes hours to acquire. It is very easy for a member to come into the House and criticise a measure; but it entails great labour to be able to explain a Bill properly. This provision has been tested. It exists in Cape Colony, and has been in operation there for some years. In contemplation of introducing this provision into the amendment of the Constitution of Victoria, Sir Alexander Peacock wrote to Sir Gordon Sprigg, and obtained an expression of opinion of how the provision worked in Cape Colony. Sir Gordon Sprigg wrote :—

In practice, this procedure has proved of the greatest convenience, while sometimes it has been absolutely necessary for the proper operation of the form of Government in question. But the advantages to be derived from

this provision in the Constitution do not end here. Each Minister has his own particular administrative functions for which he is responsible to Parliament, and by these means he is enabled personally to explain or defend, in either House, the management of his department. Moreover, in this colony as in all others there are no parliamentary Under-Secretaries who, in the absence of their chiefs, can undertake the explanation and conduct through the House a measure which, whether technical or not, must naturally be more familiar to the department in charge of it than to any other, and consequently the arrangement by which the Minister who has studied and perhaps introduced the measure can attend for this purpose in either branch of the Legislature is one of great utility.

I admit that quite apart from this commendation from one who has had long experience of the working of the practice, the proposal commends itself to me on its merits. Each House has a right to have at its command the best talent for introducing legislation.

MR. MORAN: Will the leader of the Opposition have the right to go to the other House to oppose a measure?

Dissolution of both Houses.

THE PREMIER: There are some general matters which I do not desire to refer to, as I have occupied the time of the House too long. Members will see that we provide that there shall be a dissolution at once of both Houses. I see no other scheme to adopt if reform is to be carried out. I have turned the matter over in my mind several times to see whether some arrangement could be made to suit the members of the Legislative Council who do not like a dissolution, and to try and avoid a dissolution as far as the Upper Chamber is concerned; but I see no means of avoiding it, and therefore there must be a joint dissolution. In South Australia they had a joint dissolution, and they intended to provide for one as far as Victoria was concerned. There are several other matters to which I should like to refer, but I have trespassed too long on the time of members already. But members will understand I do not pass these matters over because I desire to slide over them. Members will be able to see what these matters are in reading the Bill through.

Other Provisions.

There is one thing I will draw attention to for fear it might be overlooked. We provide in the Civil List an increase in the

salaries of Judges. We propose to put the Judges on the same basis as they are in South Australia. That, I think, is a very fair test, rather a harsh test to be applied to the Judges, because South Australia is not a place which is noted for paying large salaries. With that exception, the list is a copy of the present Civil List in force. Members will also observe we propose to deal with electors' rights. So far as the Bill is concerned, members will notice that we have taken out of the Constitution the names and boundaries of the provinces and electorates. It seems undesirable for such changeable matters to be placed in the Constitution Bill. We want to put in the Constitution as little changeable matter as possible. Let us have in the Redistribution of Seats Bill, or in the Franchise or Electoral Bill, all matters on which changes may be necessary. There is no reason why, when we want to have a redistribution of seats, we should have to deal with the Constitution. It is desirable above all things that the Constitution should not be lightly changed; we should not desire to change the Constitution once every three years. There should not be contained in the Constitution Bill matters that can be repealed just as if it were an ordinary Bill. People do not seem to realise that when we are dealing with an amendment of the Constitution Act we are exercising our constitutional functions; whereas in an ordinary piece of legislation we are discharging our legislative functions. I therefore remove all that changeable matter into the Redistribution of Seats Bill or a Franchise and Electoral Bill. In connection with the qualification of electors, while I leave in this Constitution Bill the qualification found there, I insert the qualifying words, "until the Parliament otherwise provide," thus following the practice of the Commonwealth Constitution; and the effect is that we can deal with the qualification of electors by passing an ordinary Act of Parliament. We shall be discharging our legislative and not our constitutional functions if in the future we wish to deal with a question which involves qualification simply, and so also with redistribution of seats. Although requiring the Royal assent, these measures will not involve a tampering with the Constitution Act.

MR. MORAN: Will you require that assent for a Redistribution of Seats Bill?

THE PREMIER: Yes; and I think for an Electoral Bill, too.

MR. MORAN: Then the process will take just as long?

THE PREMIER: It is a question not of length of time, but of principle. There is no reason why we should be required to exercise our constitutional functions when that can be avoided. We wish to lay down the rule that the Constitution is not affected by the rearrangement of numbers in the Houses, whether large or small. As far as possible we keep out of the Constitution these changeable factors.

General reasons for the Bill.

I admit this Bill is open to a great number of criticisms, as every other similar Bill must be. I have prepared numerous schemes, and in criticising them have been abundantly successful. If any member can produce a scheme not open to serious criticism, I shall be delighted to have it. I welcome the co-operation of any and every member to assist in solving this difficulty. I can assure hon. members that if they approach this or any similar Bill in a merely critical spirit, they have a very easy task, but if they approach it with the desire not only to criticise but to suggest another more satisfactory Bill, I assure them from experience that they have an extremely difficult task before them. If members point to a particular electorate and say, "It is small in numbers," and test its right to representation by comparison with a populous electorate, it will not stand the test. If we point to a particular electorate which contains an industrial centre, and compare it with a comparatively poor and sparsely-populated electorate, it will not stand the test. But if we endeavour to apply to this or to any other Bill those three factors I have mentioned, if we try to combine them in a common-sense way, so as to secure a fair equilibrium between population, interests, and territorial rights, then I believe members, however long and fully they criticise that Bill, will agree with me in saying it is a fair combination of all the conflicting elements. I submit the Bill with confidence to the House. I shall welcome criticism; and I believe it will emerge successfully from all

criticism that is not captious. Apply fair criticism and fair tests, and it will be found satisfactory. I regret that we should have to abolish any electorates. Any man who has been in Parliament must feel a certain amount of pain when the duty is cast upon him of saying that some electorates shall be wiped out. It seems like a personal affront. So far as the redistribution is concerned, I am glad to think the honours are fairly divided. The Opposition are losing no more than the Government. One thing I do regret is that two seats which have to go, under this scheme, namely the Murchison and the Irwin or Moore, are in the North. They are northern agricultural areas.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have killed Cue also.

THE PREMIER: I have not so much sympathy with gold-mining electors, for they can look after themselves, wherever they are. But I regret the disappearance of the Murchison and the Irwin, though I fail to see how it can be averted, since owing to the policy of the Midland Railway Company, those districts have not been able to develop like the other agricultural electorates. No doubt their time will come in the future. When they have the chance they will develop rapidly and justify increased representation; but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that at present both the Moore and the Irwin cannot stand: there must be a reduction. We can hardly shut our eyes to the fact that both Greenough and the Murchison cannot stand: there must be some combination. And so members will find I have reduced only where I was bound to reduce. As to the pastoralists, as we have retained for them three constituencies, they at all events, having regard to their population, have no ground for complaint.

MR. REID: Why do you wipe out Mt. Burges, with 2,900 electors?

THE PREMIER: I am not wiping it out. I am adding Yilgarn to it. But because Yilgarn is the more historically important, its name is retained, out of compliment to the part it played in the early days of gold-mining. When the combination takes place, the power of voting goes to Mt. Burges, and the name to Yilgarn; and this is but reasonable,

for Yilgarn was an electorate long before Mt. Burges existed.

Mode of Procedure.

So far as the boundaries of the districts are concerned, I propose with the consent of the House to get on with the second reading of the Constitution Bill, and when we get into Committee, to deal at once with the two clauses, one in reference to the members of the Upper House and the other to the members of the Lower House. When we have disposed of those two clauses, I then propose to pass the Bill in the ordinary way through Committee. But directly those clauses have been settled, then we shall have the number of members defined for the purpose of the Redistribution of Seats Bill. That Bill can then be formally read a second time, and referred to a select committee, which can carry on its work at the same time as we are going through Committee with this Bill. Of course, the local knowledge of all members will be required to put right the boundaries of the electorates. To do that is impossible for any one man. I have received great assistance, for which I desire to offer my thanks, from the Surveyor General (Mr. Johnston) and the Electoral Registrar (Mr. Daly). They have given me loyal assistance and have taken endless trouble to ascertain the figures and to fix the boundaries as given in the Bill and shown on the maps now in the Chamber. But they realise as well as I that members who have local knowledge will be able to detect and correct a great number of mistakes. I wish members to help me to pass an Act that will satisfy not ourselves and the Legislative Council only, but the country. This is a question which belongs to no party on this or that side of the House. Whatever proposal is brought forward is submitted for discussion with a sincere hope that by discussion and criticism we shall be able to send forth from this House a Bill satisfactory to ourselves and to the people of this State. We can depend that whether this Bill is to become law this year or next year, it must become law before the next general election. The duty devolves upon members of producing a Bill good and satisfactory; and they will not be able to evade responsibility by saying, "the Govern-

ment did this," or "the Government did that."

Concluding Remarks.

In dealing with our Constitution, party politics should be beside the question. We should unite in the effort to bring forth a Constitution Act which will be a credit to ourselves; because this is the most important Bill we can place on our statute-book, a Bill which when passed will last not only during the lifetime of this Government or of this Parliament, but for generations after we are dead and gone. It ought to remain at all times as a monument of the good work we could do. I hope it will not be impaired by any factious criticism, either on one side or the other. I hope members will approach it with a single desire to get a good working Bill; not a Bill which will satisfy everybody—that is impossible, but a Bill which will satisfy the moderate people of this State. We can do it if we try. If we put aside this untruthful and I am glad to say feeble cry of false economy, if we put aside this cry and the cry of those who want an unduly swelled House; if we approach the measure with a single desire to do what we believe to be right, fearless of consequences, I am satisfied we shall place on the statute-book a Constitution Act and a Redistribution of Seats Act which will do credit to us, and will satisfy the great majority of the people of this State. For many years you, Mr. Speaker, have worked in the interests of the country to secure parliamentary reform, and have lived to see how many defects there have been in the Acts of the past. If we live as long as you and retain our parliamentary positions, I hope that when we look back on the Constitution Act of 1902 we shall be able to say with all confidence that while we were always anxious to make that Bill run in close touch with the interest of this people, to create a Parliament which would at all times reflect its truest and its most mature opinions, it can never be said of us that because some public clamour arose outside, we prostituted what we knew in our hearts to be our duty to the country, in the vain desire to secure a temporary and evanescent popularity. I move the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by MR. NANSON, debate adjourned for one week.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James), in moving the second reading, said: There is no question of principle involved in this Bill, as it is a fixing of boundaries only. I formally move the second reading.

On motion by MR. NANSON, debate adjourned for one week.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at half-past nine o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th October, 1902.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, Papers relating to alteration in Classification and Rate Book. 2, New regulations under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. 3, Papers relating to the prosecution of Mr. W. d'Arcy Uhr (moved for by Hon. C. E. Dempster).

Ordered: To lie on the table.