

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd September, 1903.

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

### PRAYERS.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE PREMIER: Progress Report (first) of Royal Commission on Forestry, with evidence.

By THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Goldfields Water Supply Act, By-laws Additions. Railway Classification and Rate Book, Alterations.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

### GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, DAM OVERFLOWING.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS, in laying papers on the table, informed the House that the Mundaring Dam, having a capacity of 4,600,000,000 gallons, was now full to overflowing. (General applause.)

### QUESTION—BANK HOLIDAYS, SPECIAL.

MR. HIGHAM asked the Premier: 1, What bank holidays, other than those provided by Statute, have been declared since July 1st, 1902, and on whose requests. 2, Whether any protests have been made against this practice by commercial bodies; if so, when, and on what grounds. 3, Whether it is the intention of the Government, when in future granting special bank holidays, to consult the commercial as well as the financial bodies, with the view of minimising loss and inconvenience to the public.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Only three bank holidays for the whole State, but several local holidays. In nearly every case the holiday has been gazetted at the request of the banks. 2, The Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, on the

18th April, 1903, protested against the proclamation of Easter Tuesday as a bank holiday, on the grounds of inconvenience. 3, The Government is of opinion that these holidays should be the result of arrangement between the Chambers of Commerce and the associated banks.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY RUNNING SHEDS, NORTH FREMANTLE.

MR. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, When the Government propose to commence the erection of railway Running Sheds at North Fremantle. 2, What has caused the delay in the construction of these works.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, It has never been decided to erect Running Sheds at North Fremantle, and in any case nothing can be done until the evacuation of the loco. shops at Fremantle and the building of the new station are effected. 2, Answered by No. 1.

### QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, IRRIGATION.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH asked the Minister for Works: Whether, seeing that there will be a great surplus of water in the Mundaring Dam during the coming summer season, the Minister will consider the question of allowing the farmers along the pipe-track sufficient water to irrigate, say not more than 10 acres each, to test the question of raising artificial grasses by irrigation. The charge for such water not to exceed actual cost.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The question is already receiving attention, and it is hoped that some suitable arrangement can and will be arrived at.

### QUESTION—AGENCY GENERAL, COMMERCIAL.

MR. GORDON, for Mr. Daglish, asked the Premier: 1, Whether the Government has considered the question of altering the character of the Agency General, and substituting therefor a Commercial Agency when the term of the present Agent General expires. 2, Whether the Government will submit its proposals on these questions to Parliament before

binding the country by any new appointment for a term of years.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, The Government does not think it desirable, at present, to make any alteration in the character of the Agent General. After the appointment of a High Commissioner by the Commonwealth, the matter will be considered. 2, The Government has not discussed the question of appointing a successor to Mr. Lefroy. The matter will be left open over the general election.

#### SUPPLY BILL, £500,000.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of a Supply Bill (No. 2), £500,000.

Standing Orders suspended.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means, formal resolutions being passed preliminary to a Bill.

Supply Bill (No. 2) introduced, and read a first time.

#### SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner): I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time, and in doing so I desire to inform the House that I purpose delivering my Financial Statement this day week. I regret there has been an unnecessary amount of delay, but this has not been due to lack of inclination on my part, but to the fact that the Estimates required a good deal of revision, and have been put in a form on the lines adopted by the whole of the other Australian States and by the Commonwealth. This in itself has caused a good deal of delay, not on my part but on the part of the printers and officers.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): There is something unusual about this extraordinary vote of the House. I call it extraordinary, but it is a standing dish each session, not by this Government but by all Governments. It is hardly a satisfactory state of things for a House to be allotting, at a gallop like this in a few minutes, half a million of money. Has it ever occurred to those in charge of the Administration that the close of the financial year might be altered so that these matters might be ready when Parliament meets? We do not know how much money has been spent, or how much

money is going to be spent; we have a revision after the Estimates come down, but we have nothing to say in the allotment of this £500,000. I recognise the peculiar difficulties the Treasurer has had this session; but if we cast our memory back, never has there been a Treasurer who did not think he was able to justify his position in not bringing down the Estimates earlier. I think it would be well if the Government took into consideration the desirability of altering the close of the financial year.

THE TREASURER (in reply): One of the delays has been caused by the form we have used in the Estimates; that is, we have given the actual expenditure on each item for the year. The financial year closes on the 30th June, and it is generally the 17th or 18th of July before we get the expenditure closed up, and then we have to make out the State's balance-sheet. The consequence is that a month or six weeks must elapse. According to the Estimates as the other States prepare them, the Treasurer will be enabled to bring in his Budget Speech on the 1st July if he cares to do so, because there is only shown the appropriation from the previous year. I think it would be a wise thing if we left it that way, enabling the Treasurer or whoever is in charge of a department to give any information required by the House; and it would be the means of placing the Estimates before the House, as I maintain and always have maintained should be done, much earlier in the session. The Treasurer does not like coming down for supply any more than the House likes to see him coming for it. He would rather have the Estimates here; but even then it would be necessary to ask for supply.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Referring to clauses,

MR. MORAN asked how far would the amount in this Bill carry us?

THE TREASURER: It would carry us on about six weeks. The first amount granted for supply (£1,000,000) was about exhausted.

Clauses, etc., passed.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

# BREAD BILL.

## RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by **MR. HIGHAM**, Bill re-committed for amendment of Clause 3.

**MR. HARPER** in the Chair.

Clause 3—Interpretation :

**MR. HIGHAM** moved that in the definition of fancy bread, line 15, the words "two pounds in weight" be struck out. Fancy bread was sold irrespective of weight. The fancy bread described as Coburg loaf was two pounds in weight, but pipe loaves (classed as fancy bread) were usually four pounds in weight; therefore to leave the clause as it stood would be inconsistent.

Amendment passed, and the words struck out.

**MR. HIGHAM**, referring to the last paragraph defining standard wheaten bread, moved as an amendment that the word "pure," in the first line, now reading "pure and sound flour of wheat," be transposed to read "pure wheat."

**MR. MORAN** : As the definition stood, it meant the pure product of wheat, but did not say the kind of wheat. The hon. member wished to provide that the product should be from pure wheat: that was a different thing.

**THE PREMIER** : What would be impure wheat?

**MR. MORAN** : The clause did not bind the baker to use good wheat, but only that the product from wheat should be pure.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

**MR. HIGHAM**, referring to line 16 in the same paragraph, moved as an amendment that the words "not more than" be inserted before "two-thirds." It must be evident that certain classes of wheat would not yield the full and regular recognised proportion of flour, namely 40lbs. to the bushel of wheat; the variation being due to climatic conditions, under which certain kinds of wheat might not yield more than 35lbs. of flour to the bushel of wheat.

**MR. MORAN** : Had these amendments been considered?

**THE PREMIER** : Yes.

**MR. MORAN** : The two-thirds was a maximum; but the proportion might be one-tenth.

**THE PREMIER** : That would not be a disadvantage.

**MR. HIGHAM** : A miller would not turn out bran and pollard, the cheaper products of wheat, when he could produce flour, the dearer product.

**MR. MORAN** : How did the law stand in other countries?

**THE PREMIER** : This had been the law in England since 1836, and the Eastern States had similar enactments.

**MR. PURKISS** : To whom could the purchaser apply for information as to whether bread was of the standard quality? For years past there had been Acts regulating the weight of a loaf.

**THE PREMIER** : No.

**MR. PURKISS** : Several small bakers would be suddenly fined 5s. each, and then for two or three years the law would remain inoperative. For want of proper administration such Acts were in this State useless; instance the Health Act. The Ministry appeared to be suffering from a diarrhoea of legislation.

**MR. HIGHAM** : A bushel of wheat, weighing 60 pounds, might produce 40 pounds of flour, with 20 pounds of offal and waste. If it yielded more than 40 pounds of flour, the flour would be below the standard; or if less, it would be finer than the standard. The amendment would provide for wheat which would not yield 40 pounds per bushel.

**MR. STONE** : No miller would buy wheat to make flour unless the quality would insure a first-class product, for the contrary practice would damage his sales. The discussion was a waste of time.

**HON. F. H. PIESSE** : The amendment could do little harm, as the two clauses would be quite inoperative; for without analysis, judgment would be only conjectural. The amendment could not affect baked bread, and any examination would have to be made before baking. The standard might well have been raised. Some wheats would yield only 30lbs. to the bushel, others 42 or 43; hence forty-two-sixtieths would be the right standard, and the flour would not then be impoverished or rendered unwholesome.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with farther amendments, and the report adopted.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL.

### IN COMMITTEE—ASSEMBLY ELECTORATES.

Resumed from 9th September.

MR. HARPER in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of Bill.

First Schedule—Council Provinces.

THE PREMIER: When last dealing with the Bill, we had partly discussed the First Schedule, and a discussion subsequently arose.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The question had not yet been put.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member need not be afraid, need not be anxious. The question of the First Schedule (Council provinces) did not arise now. The Committee would have to deal with the Second Schedule (Assembly electorates); therefore it would be necessary now to formally pass the First Schedule, and consider it farther on recommitment after the Second Schedule had been dealt with.

MR. MORAN: The Premier had promised to recommit the First Schedule, with the view of inserting a new province. A suggestion was made, and there was a readjustment, giving the goldfields three more members, also the metropolis. That was where the consideration of the Schedule was left.

First Schedule put and passed.

Second Schedule—Assembly Electorates:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: On the second reading of the Bill, and also while the First Schedule was under consideration, he called attention to the fact that the principles of redistribution as laid down by the Premier when moving the second reading had not been carried out; that in no sense had the rules the Premier laid down been followed. For many years he (Mr. Illingworth) had been advocating a more equitable redistribution of seats, and he believed many of our troubles arose from the fact that the House had not been sufficiently representative of the people. It would be difficult to make the necessary alterations in this schedule, although it was possible that might be done. It would be difficult to make such adjustment so that the redistribution would be at all compatible

with the views of the people of the State. The principles which the Premier laid down were to consider first of all population—not altogether population—then to consider interests, and then to consider to some extent territory. In order to get at something like what he (Mr. Illingworth) considered a reasonable compromise on the question, he thought it would be best to strike out the schedule altogether with a view of reconstructing the number of seats and also altering the boundaries to a certain extent. If the Committee were with him in this, he would move directly to strike out the schedule.

THE PREMIER: With the object of reconsidering the number of electorates?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: With the object perhaps of appointing a fresh select committee to deal with the question in a special way. His object was to save time if he could, but if he did not succeed in that it was open to deal with the schedule on the various items as they came before members. He wanted the Premier to recognise that he was only moving for the purpose of getting something like an equitable redistribution. He had no other object in view; his motion had no other meaning. He hoped the Government, and those sitting with the Government, would be able to support the suggestion he had to make, because our first object should be to make the House representative in its truest sense. The Bill at present really made no redistribution—scarcely at all. The few changes made were not in the direction of equitable redistribution. The Bill as it stood proposed to give to the metropolis district with Perth 13 seats. When he said "metropolis" he meant Perth with suburbs and Fremantle with its suburbs. The Bill gave 13 seats for 43,000 electors, as near as we could get upon the figures we had to hand. We had 13 seats proposed by the Government for the metropolis and Fremantle, practically the metropolis. He wished to point out, what had been ably pointed out by the member for West Perth recently, that the people who lived in what was called the metropolis had no interest and no territory. We must consider the metropolis on the basis of population. The interests of the metropolitan people were the interests of the

whole State. Their sympathies, in fact their whole living, depended upon the progress of the State as a whole, and consequently there was no other consideration for them than the basis of population. The Government proposed to give to this vast number of electors, who practically were interested in every portion of the State, who lived by the State, and whose interests were scattered all over the State, only 13 seats in the Lower House. If we looked at interests, the great interest which we had in the State was mining, and we found in the mining districts there were the same number of electors, in round numbers 43,000. The Government proposed to give these people, who had population on the one hand and a considerable amount of territory, also the largest interest in the State, 15 members.

**THE PREMIER :** How did the hon. member make that out? It was 17.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** If the Premier called Collie and Pilbarra mining electorates, perhaps he could make the number 17.

**THE PREMIER :** Did not the hon. member call Pilbarra a mining district?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** It would be quite as reasonable to call Kimberley a mining district as Pilbarra.

**THE PREMIER :** Rubbish!

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** Passing from that, the Government proposed to give to the agriculturists 18 seats.

**MR. YELVERTON :** How did the hon. member make that out?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** It would come out directly. The agriculturists were to have 18 seats for 28,000 electors, and the Government proposed to give four members to the North with 3,000 electors. In proposing to give so large a number of representatives to the agricultural districts the Government were carrying out one principle of their proposal, that was to consider interests. But this was giving an inordinate amount of representation to this interest. We had 28,000 people with 18 seats in the House. As far as the proposal for the North was concerned it was evident it had been based on territory. The interests were somewhat divided, the population was exceedingly small, and the territory was a very huge and wide territory; so whatever we might think about the question of redis-

tribution we must consider the North apart from the rest of the State. We must give it representation on a different line from what we did the other portions of the State.

**MR. CONNOR :** A gold rush might occur there.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** In that large territory we did not know what might develop at any moment. We could not expect one man or two men or three men to represent it. If one member sat for this territory on the basis of population, he could not possibly be expected to represent this huge territory with all its possibilities. The Government were wise in giving four seats to the North, and he had no desire to alter those figures, but he thought we might with safety and wisdom, and with satisfaction to the people of the State, alter the figures in connection with the agricultural districts. If we gave 14 seats to the agricultural districts with 28,000 electors, we should get nearer to the principle which he thought should really guide us in a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Consequently he desired to see a redistribution take something like that form. There would be 16 seats for the metropolis, 16 seats for the mining industry, these two representing 86,000 electors; while we would give 14 seats to the agricultural interest and four seats to the North, making 18 for 31,000 electors. If we were to take into consideration the people at all, he thought there could be no cavil against this suggested redistribution. In the House, really as a matter of right, we should claim a redistribution, except for the North, on a population basis. There was no reason whatever for altering it. If we took the agricultural interest for instance, we might put three or four electorates together with absolutely the same interests, with comparatively a small population closely linked by railway, and they could be fairly represented by one man, while it was almost impossible to represent a mining district as laid out by the Government's scheme by one man. It should be agreed that where there was railway communication and no division of interests, that electorate could be combined. What was to prevent the member for Toodyay representing Newcastle, York, and Northam? All were connected, they had one distinct interest, with a reasonable popu-

lation, and what was to prevent one member from fairly and properly representing those people in the House, when it was considered the 16 representatives of the metropolis were also his helpers in that particular interest, because there was a large number of people in the metropolis associated with the agricultural interest who would aid the member in any representation made to the House. On the other hand, if we dealt with a large district like Mount Margaret, scattered over a large area with huge centres, although the interest was the same, all mining, still there was a difference in other respects. There was no communication with Lawlers and Leonora, and away right from Leonora to the South Murchison district. The district of South Murchison went to Peak Hill. The districts were separated each from the other with their own special wants, and it was exceedingly difficult for one man to represent a district of this character. The same did not hold good with regard to agricultural districts and districts that were linked together. Most agricultural districts were linked together by railway, the interests were identical, and if 14 seats were given to them, that would be fair and honest, in fact an exceedingly liberal representation in the House. In proposing to redistribute the seats, the proper place to give additional representation was in the populous districts. Having to give fair representation to all the interests outside the metropolitan district, four members to the North, and 14 members to the agricultural districts, we might fairly distribute the remainder of the members on a population basis. What did this House represent? And by what right did one member sit here representing 300 electors while another member represented 9,000 electors?

**THE PREMIER:** Because the law allowed it.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Then such a law required amendment. After making proper provision for territory and interests as advocated by the Premier, the remainder of the seats ought to be distributed on a population basis. In this amending proposal he was endeavouring to make a sufficient provision for the agricultural interest in allotting to it 14 seats; and surely it would not be disputed that the principal interest in this State

was mining, that the mining districts had the population, and therefore had a right of preponderance in this State. He did not go so far as to ask for seats to be distributed on that basis, but asked that the populous districts should have representation on a population basis; that interests should be considered as the Premier had contended, taking into account first population, second interests, and third territory. Interests and territory would be sufficiently provided for in regard to the North by allotting four seats, as in this amending scheme. Coming to the agricultural interest, this was common ground, for there were no divisions as between one part of the agricultural districts and another, connected as they were by railway; consequently we should make an equitable redistribution, and do away with the anomalies that had caused so much trouble and had called for redistribution again and again. What was done in previous redistributions was to increase the number of seats; but that was not an answer to the present demand for equitable redistribution. We had now got to the limit of seats in having 50 representatives in this Assembly, which number he regarded as a maximum; and we ought to redistribute the seats not wholly on a population basis, but with a reasonable approach to that principle. There was no guide except population in regard to the metropolis, and we should distribute these seats on a population basis. Coming to mining, this represented a single interest, with a population united and equivalent in number to the metropolitan district; therefore it would be fair to give to the mining interest the same number of representatives as was to be given to the metropolitan district.

**THE PREMIER:** The proposal in the Bill would give the mining interest more.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** It was a question of giving equitable representation, and he wanted something like fair play in the redistribution of seats. If the suggestion he was making was acceptable to the Committee, the schedule might be withdrawn and an endeavour made to redistribute the seats on a more equitable basis. If the Government thought the redistribution proposed in the Bill was on an equitable basis, he desired that we should distribute the seats on a more

equitable basis. He could not see how the Government could give only 13 seats to 43,000 electors, and at the same time give 13 seats to 28,000 electors. It would be a farce for members to go back to their constituents at the general election and say we had got redistribution under this Bill. In accordance with the suggestions he had made, he moved as an amendment,

That the schedule be struck out.

He did this with the object of securing better redistribution, and in taking this course he desired to act in co-operation with the Government.

#### PROCEDURE ON AMENDMENT.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member could vote against the schedule. The question before the Committee was that the Second Schedule stand as printed. He saw no difference between moving to strike out the schedule and voting against it.

**MR. MORAN:** The schedule should be withdrawn with a view to putting in a new one.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** There was no notice given of any new schedule to be proposed.

**MR. JACOBY:** The hon. member (Mr. Moran) had been at it for a week, and had not made up his mind yet.

**MR. MORAN:** On a point of order, was it not feasible that as in the case of moving to strike out a clause in a Bill, a member might move now to strike out this schedule? For this purpose he regarded a schedule and a clause as on the same footing.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** There was no difference between voting against the schedule and moving that it be struck out.

**MR. MORAN:** The difference was that we should go to a vote on the question, and if we voted on the question as stated by the Chairman "That the schedule stand as printed," if a majority were in favour of the question in that form, the schedule must absolutely remain without alteration. Had not the Government to recommit the Bill in order to bring in the recommendations as to boundaries?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** There was always power to recommit.

#### AMENDING SCHEME.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** While not prepared to say whether the ruling of the

Chairman was correct, he did not desire to dispute it. He, therefore, now moved as an amendment in the schedule,

That the words "Beaconsfield electoral district" be inserted between "Balcatta electoral district" and "Beverley electoral district."

The object of the amendment was to give another seat to the Fremantle district, in accordance with the proposal he had outlined; and this amendment would give representation on something like a population basis, at any rate as far as the metropolitan district (including Fremantle) was concerned. On a basis of population, there was room for another seat in the Fremantle district.

**MR. MORAN:** Members who were moving in this matter had achieved one good purpose. He had never before seen such a gathering of the clans in this Chamber. There was evidently danger abroad for somebody, else why this mustering of the clans? It was to defeat an amendment which had for its purpose to bring Western Australia into line with the sister States in material progress, in modern ideas, and in industries; an amendment which recognised that we had in this State adventurous spirits, the pick of the Eastern States, who had come here and opened Western Australia, and were entitled to equitable representation in Parliament. Why had this movement been made? Simply in order that the forces on the Government and the Opposition cross-benches might, by a reasonable compromise, be consolidated; and seeing the necessity for such a compromise, the liberals in the House had come together. The Government, if supported by some members on the Opposition side, were strong enough to defeat the popular will; but the proposal of the united cross-benches would give much more liberal representation to agriculture than was given in any other State in Australia. It was proposed by the combination on the cross-benches to give to the metropolitan area 16 members and to the goldfields 16 members. The metropolitan basin included the country from the Mundaring Weir to Fremantle, and the environs. For the purpose of comparison the figures must be taken from the Census rolls. The only place which would suffer by such a method was South Perth, the electors on the roll being 1,600, whereas

the population appeared to be considerably over 2,000 or 3,000. The figures were: Albany 1,777, Beverley 900, Bunbury 1,760, Cockburn Sound 1,300, Geraldton 1,400, Greenough 900, Irwin 550, Moore 750, Murray 2,400, Nelson 711, Northam 2,500, Plantagenet 1,600, South-West Mining 2,000, Sussex 1,200, Swan 1,800, Toodyay 1,200, Wellington 1,900, Williams 1,400, and York 900. The population on the rolls was 26,600 for the existing seats. The northern electorates—Gascoyne, East Kimberley, West Kimberley, Murchison, Pilbarra, and Roebourne—had a population of 3,084; the metropolitan electorates a population of 43,000; and the goldfields electorates, including Pilbarra, admittedly a purely mining seat, a population of 43,000. This arrangement would give 17 seats to mining, though the interests of Pilbarra were entirely bound up with the interests of the North. Now compare quotas. The total voting population of the State was 116,684. If the 50 Assembly seats were distributed on a population basis, the quota would be about 2,334; and taking a seat as a unit of representation, the metropolitan area would get  $18\frac{1}{4}$  seats and the goldfields  $18\frac{1}{4}$ , making  $36\frac{1}{2}$  units of representation on a population basis. By this quota agriculture would be entitled to  $11\frac{3}{4}$  units in the Assembly, and the North to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  units. Only by giving the figures arrived at on a population basis could one show what the cross-benches combination proposed to give away to the agriculturists and the people of the North. The figures quoted would give an aggregate of  $49\frac{1}{2}$  units in the Assembly—being near enough to 50. The proposal was to give 16 members to the metropolitan area and 16 to the goldfields area, being a loss to those areas of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  units as compared with a population basis; while 14 seats were to be given to the agricultural areas, or a gain to them of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  units; and 4 seats to the North, a gain to that area of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  units, or three times their actual quota. Comparing population with interests, it was a loss to population of about six seats; and to those who said this was not a heavy loss, he pointed out that it was not only striking six seats off the population basis, but giving those six seats to the smaller interests, involving a

displacement of 12 seats. This was what in the game of "pyramids" was known as "one up and one away"; one up for the small seats, and one away from population. Would anyone say that was not a fair redistribution of seats from the standpoint of the agriculturists of the South or the men on the land in the North? Surely it was most generous and liberal. Giving the metropolitan areas and the goldfields areas 32 members, their combined voting strength was 86,000, the strength of each being equal, and showing a quota for the metropolitan and goldfields areas of about 2,690. The agricultural areas would get 14 members for 27,600 voters, a quota of 1,970. That was a difference in favour of agriculture of 719—a generous allowance. Worked out to a percentage, it showed an advantage to the agricultural as compared with the populous areas of over 27 per cent., without reckoning the pastoral representation. The proposed northern quota was 770, a difference of 70 per cent. in favour of the northern seats. Surely this was a most generous redistribution, and highly favourable to agricultural and pastoral voters. Still, if it could be conceived that the populous centres should at any time be unanimously desirous that their will should really become law, they would have 32 members in this House as against the balance, 28; and that was as it should be in a popular Chamber. The time could hardly ever come when the goldfields and the metropolitan areas would solidly unite to injure the agricultural and the pastoral. Why then the fear of popular government? Surely the difference of 27 per cent. was a sufficient advantage to agriculture. As to the North, the concession given to it was ridiculously generous, and beyond criticism. All sides of the House were on common ground as to the North. He would give the quotas for some of the other areas. Perth, East Perth, North Perth, South Perth, West Perth, and Subiaco had a population of 26,064. Give that population eight seats, as the cross-benches proposed, and the quota for the metropolitan area as just defined was 3,250. Or take Perth only, leaving out the suburbs of South Perth and Subiaco, the city with four electorates contained a total of 21,259 electors. Give that



population six seats, and the quota for the metropolis proper would be 3,876—a very large quota, 300 higher than the quotas for Kalgoorlie and Hannans. Take Fremantle. The cross-bench combination was supported by one Fremantle member, who was independent enough to maintain that on this great question he was not entirely bound by the Government. If we took Cockburn Sound, only that part of Fremantle about the Smelting Works and Beaconsfield, there were 1,000 electors, in Fremantle 1,200 electors, in East Fremantle 4,050, in North Fremantle 1,941, in South Fremantle 4,000 electors, in Claremont 3,130. That gave a population for Fremantle of 15,407. If we divided that amongst six seats—including Claremont and the new seat for Fremantle, which would be no new seat but the seat in place of Cockburn Sound which it was proposed to call “Beaconsfield”—what was the quota for Fremantle? We got exactly what should be the quota for the whole of Western Australia or very nearly, 2,600 electors. If we took Albany, Plantagenet, and Williams, we got a quota considerably less than that, without the new agricultural seat. In regard to the other parts of the State, the amendments proposed to be made would develop as we went along. All the figures, proposals, amalgamations, alterations, and obliterations would be laid before the Committee. The point under consideration was whether the time had come in Western Australia to give population a chance. He had pointed out in reference to the metropolitan area that in some places the Government took population as the basis. If we considered population apart from voting strength, the metropolitan area was stronger than any other part of the State. He noticed that everybody when giving the debt of the State took the population, the men, women, and children. When one talked of the incidence of taxation one made no distinction whatever; a child paid as much debt as a man, in the eyes of the statistician. Assuming “no taxation without representation,” then the metropolitan area would not get by a long way justice on a population basis. We did not take that: we took it entirely on the voting strength, and the voting strength of the goldfields electorates came closely to the population,

because they were nearly all adults on the goldfields. For instance, the voting strength of Mt. Margaret would be a fair index of the population, but the voting strength of Perth would be a very poor index of the population. That fact should not be eliminated, because taxation and representation went hand in hand. But take the population of the two centres, the metropolis and the agricultural centres, on a population basis: the question had arisen, and would become a topic at the next election, whether the member for Boulder (the Minister for Lands) and the Minister for Mines were right when they voted for redistribution on a fair basis before they were Ministers, or whether they were right now in standing up against the popular will since they had become Ministers.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What was the hon. member's idea of the popular will?

MR. MORAN: The member for East Kimberley was going to help us, the member for Pilbarra was helping us in the battle, and the northern members and the agricultural members recognised that something should be done, and were willing to give way a little; but the way to get at the popular will was to put in the Redistribution of Seats Bill as nearly as possible the vote values. As we could not get the vote values, we might get as near to it as we could in this Parliament. Let us get equal vote value for the metropolitan area and equal vote value for the goldfields. Then we would have 32 seats speaking on the basis of equal vote values. Having done that, let the Government put this Bill through the House and go to the country on it. That was how to find out the popular will. But the Government did not propose to find out the popular will: they only desired to find out the agricultural will. The Government, if returned, would represent a majority in the Parliament but a minority in the country. Another way to get at the popular will, although it was not very satisfactory, would be to have the matter referred by referendum to the people of the State on the question, “Are you in favour of a redistribution of seats on a population basis, leaving out the northern and the agricultural areas? Then we should get at the popular will. His desire was that at the next general elec-

tion the popular will should speak. It was also a question whether the Premier had changed his opinion about trusting the people of the State. He (Mr. Moran) had always striven to have a redistribution of seats made on a population basis. The Premier had been desirous of getting the popular will on the question of Federation, he was the champion in the House of getting the popular will on Federation on the basis of one-man-one-vote. Why was the Premier afraid to trust the people of Perth and Fremantle, why was he unwilling to trust the metropolitan area to-day and to give them justice? Because the Premier knew that if the metropolitan area had full representation, the policy of his Government in neglecting sanitation, deep drainage, and the water supply, would not meet with the approval of the people, for it was a policy to rob Perth of what was its birthright, a fair share of the revenue of the State according to population. The Premier knew that policy would not be acceptable to Perth. It was all very well to say Perth did not want this or that, but we should give to Perth, to Fremantle, and to Guildford an opportunity of saying whether they had a fair share of representation. Were the people in the metropolis in favour of giving the agricultural portions of the country a larger representation by 20 per cent., and the northern districts representation 77 per cent. greater than the metropolitan area got? The Government feared to trust the people of the country. The Premier would not trust people in the metropolis because they had not been here as long as the people in the agricultural areas; and in a like manner he would not trust the people of the goldfields, who were not the salt of the earth and who were supposed not to be loyal to Western Australia. Sixteen seats to the eastern and the central parts of the State were sufficient if we liked to call Collie a mining district. He did not think it was, but under the redistribution which the member for Cue proposed, Collie would be carved without cutting out a man here who was holding for or against the Government. The proposed new scheme did not take into consideration who would vote for labour or who would vote for capital, who would vote for the Government or against them.

It was proposed to cut out the seats without respect to what the representation was. We should not have the boundaries running round here and there, picking out a bit here, a bit there, and a bit somewhere else. If we did that we should do what Victoria did and give a section of the community special votes. In that case we should cut out of West Perth the Labour vote. We should cut out of Kalgoorlie the Labour vote and run the boundaries round in a zigzag way to get a conservative seat. Collie would under the new scheme be a fairly liberal seat. [MR. EWING: It was now.] It was cut up in a glibet kind of way at present. Was the hon. member representing the South-West Mining portion or some shadowy proposal in the Government Bill? The scheme submitted by the member for Cue did not propose to cut up an electorate as the present Bill did. If he were to read out the boundaries of the Collie electorate it would take him a couple of hours to go round the corners of one man's house, to go round this tree or that tree and round the shafts of mines, because it did not suit the Government. Boundaries described in words were difficult to follow, but the Collie electoral boundaries would beat nearly all the others, being very tortuous; though there was one other electorate, "Forrest," which was worse than Collie. Why make these boundaries so tortuous? What was proposed was to take no particular notice of the timber industry, but to cut up the South-West in a fairly straightforward manner, taking some notice of population and great notice of natural features, as was done everywhere else. The Government proposal was to create an extraordinary electorate called "Forrest," which was evidently designed to cut out certain timber mills. The old electorates would do very well with some minor alterations. In the other parts of the State it was desired to eliminate the pocket boroughs and to combine certain electorates together, making but small areas then. The scheme of the cross-bench party would settle the question for three years at least. That was all that could be hoped for. We were prepared to make a big allowance for the old agricultural settlers because they seemed to be afraid of the popular will. They

were here before the new comers, and they deserved some consideration; we were giving them great consideration. No special consideration was given to them in other parts of Australia or in New Zealand; yet no harm had come to the farmers in New Zealand, who were the most prosperous in the southern hemisphere. The scheme in New Zealand was on a population basis, with an allowance of 18 per cent. to small districts. If redistribution were made in this State on that basis, the agricultural districts would lose half a dozen seats at least. He appealed to those members who represented populous centres, metropolitan members especially, and he pointed out in this connection that the members for Perth and Fremantle districts had been deliberately summoned here to-day, an unprecedented gathering; those members sitting in the Chamber dumb, not a voice heard on this question. They had been brought here to vote against the interests of the people they represented, some of those members seldom appearing in this Chamber otherwise. They were brought here at the behest of the Premier, and told to vote against a proposal for giving to Perth and Fremantle fair representation. Members representing the goldfields were not found voting against fair play being given to populous parts of the State. The big bunch of members representing the South-West, who had held power in the State so long, who supported Sir John Forrest so consistently while in office, particularly the members for Bunbury, Williams, Sussex, and Murray, now sitting in different parts of the House, had all come here together to protect the agriculturists of the South-West. The only members who had not come together on this question were those representing Perth and Fremantle, he meant the bulk of them. It might be thought that on a great matter like this, sufficient to make or mar the fate of the Government, those members would be found acting together. But what did all else matter if the people were to be robbed of their rights by a combination like that acting on this occasion—a combination against the first of all principles, that of popular government? What did it matter about bringing motions against the Government on minor matters, if members would not vote in the interests of the people on the

great matter now before us? This great metropolitan area, which gave fair play to every part of the State, was not to have fair representation, and the goldfields were not to have fair representation. The Government did not propose to give the additional seats to the goldfields; they proposed to give them to agricultural districts. A fair proposition had been put by liberal members before this House and the country, a proposition on which the member for South Fremantle would go out if he were to go back on it, a proposition on which every member in the metropolitan area would have to account to his constituents. The argument against the proposition was that a House selected on a population basis could not be trusted to do justice to the whole of the State. We knew, on the other hand, that members representing Perth had always been champions of every part of the State.

MR. JACOBY: Would the agricultural members hurt the metropolis?

MR. MORAN: No; not for a second. In fact there were no more generous members than those representing the agricultural interest in this House; and if some members thought that either set of members would hurt the other by giving them equal votes, he did not agree with that view. It was remarkable how many members on the Government side of the House found it convenient to be silent on this question, relying on a solid vote without giving reasons.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for West Perth made up for it.

MR. MORAN: It would take a good deal of making up for what the Minister for Lands had done during the last 12 months. Popular rights lost a champion when the member for Boulder entered the Ministry. No one had made a speech in the Chamber in favour of redistribution with greater force or more convincing argument than the member for Boulder, the late lamented Mr. Hopkins.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: And the hon. member did not support him.

MR. MORAN: The late lamented member for Boulder, now Minister for Lands, had made a fine but not very careful somersault. [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not yet.] The Minister would not support an amendment for giving to the goldfields and the metropolitan area

equitable representation. As far as one could judge the voice of the people of Perth and Fremantle, he had never seen a disposition on the part of these people to do an injustice to either the agricultural or pastoral interests. They knew, on the contrary, that they must give fair play to all parts of the State, and they wanted to do it. They were more anxious to do justice to agriculture than were the present agricultural party. He was told that the boasted agricultural party had robbed the North of a fair share of the good things that were going; that the whole of the money, £150,000, available for repurchase of private estates had been spent in the South-West; that the whole of the agricultural vote for drainage went to the South-West. [MEMBER: They had nothing to drain in the North.] That was because the agricultural party in the past had milked it dry. To the North of Perth there was more agricultural wealth (lying dormant) than to the South of Perth, yet the agricultural members who refused in days gone by to put a tax on the Midland Railway Company's land had got their own railway purchased from the Great Southern Company, and blessings came with it, though when there was a proposal to put the screw on the Midland Company for compelling them to use their land, the agricultural party in this House protected that company and left the agricultural area north of Perth to starve. He had proposed in this Chamber many years ago to put a tax on the unimproved value of the Midland Company's land, to compel them to make use of it; but he was not supported by agricultural members representing the South-West. It was said then that there was an understanding between the company and the Government that the company should have ten years' notice. If the Midland Company's lands were handled as they ought to be, there would be such increase of agricultural settlement northward of Perth as would eclipse any rate of increase in the south. The Government experts admitted this, as he had reason to know, for when he was Minister for Lands he took steps for opening to settlement the lands in the Northampton district. The Greenough was a wheat-growing district long before the South-West became a wheat

country. Agriculturists in this House had starved the north side of Perth, and for many years the several Governments had been practically controlled by the policy of agriculturists in this House. Indeed the Government could be saved in the present issue only by those agricultural members who were now rallying round the Premier.

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

MR. MORAN (continuing): To show that in the past the northern agricultural areas had been hindered rather than succoured by this House, he need only state that the Geraldton district was the first in Western Australia to export wheat, one firm shipping 350 tons by the "Lady Douglas," which brought 38s., the highest price in Australia at the time, as against 32s., the price then ruling for South Australian wheat. It was idle to say this splendid agricultural area had fair play at the hands of the agricultural majority in the Assembly; and on the theory of the agricultural members that their districts needed special treatment, the North required special treatment and better treatment than was needed by the more favoured sections of the agricultural area. All knew the marvellous progress of the Avon Valley and of the country along the Great Southern Railway; hence the cross-benches proposed to give some preference to the northern agricultural areas as against the southern and south-western. Following the example of the Government, they proposed not to interfere with the scheme propounded by the select committee either for the North or for the northern agricultural areas; but the cross-bench members said that since in most of the States something like representation on a population basis obtained, this State ought not to lag behind. That the goldfields population were permanent was indubitably established. If men did shift from one part of the goldfields to another, they were still in the State; therefore it was proposed to give the goldfields not a liberal, but a fair share of representation. And if there were between the goldfields and the metropolitan areas any dispute as to representation, he would advocate

giving the far-out goldfields another member, as such districts were much more difficult to represent than the southern agricultural areas. That Government supporters should have entered into a conspiracy of silence on this occasion was regrettable, as was also a certain deceitfulness which would be exhibited in voting. He hoped the Fremantle people would not be misled because one or two Fremantle members pretended to be in sympathy with the amendment and voted for Beaconsfield, though previously well assured that the amendment would be defeated. If the metropolitan representatives were true to their constituents and voted unanimously, the proposals of the cross-benches would be carried. But another feature of the conspiracy was that later on a free hand would be given to one or two agricultural members to vote for the amendments, those members having previously counted heads, and knowing well that the amendments would be defeated. The cross-bench members would have liked to put on the Notice Paper a schedule showing clearly the facts and figures concerning their scheme. Evidently the Government had not had time to consider the matter. Certainly the speech of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), at one time a member of their Cabinet, who had at one time formed a Cabinet and been robbed of the Premiership, deserved a reply. Better get to work by reporting progress; and to-morrow the Notice Paper would contain a complete schedule showing the population and the constituencies which the cross-bench members proposed to insert or to delete. This would save much trouble and annoyance. He and his supporters had been forced to take their present course because they could not move to strike out the schedule. Had that been struck out, another would have been submitted in its place. The outline of the new schedule proposed was 16 seats each, with a quota of 2,700 electors to each seat, for the goldfields and the metropolitan areas respectively; 14 seats for the agricultural areas, with a quota of nearly 2,000; four seats for the North, including the goldfields seat Pilbarra, with a quota of 700 each. Roebourne also might be called a goldfields seat, containing as it did the Whim Creek, the largest copper mine in Western

Australia, and being likely to attract a large population; yet it was called a northern seat because the battle-ground for opening up railways was a northern battle, and we were with them on that.

MR. JACOBY: Collie was not an agricultural seat.

MR. MORAN: Bunbury, Wellington, Collie, and Murray were agricultural seats.

MR. HAYWARD: Bunbury could not be called an agricultural seat, under the new proposal.

MR. MORAN: Bunbury as at present constituted; and the present member could not be called a mining man, for he was the *beau ideal* of a good old English yeoman. The four places he had mentioned had a quota of 2,100 electors. Collie would be dominated by the agricultural vote, but he was not interested whichever way it was. The timber industry would have a good say, but there would be the agricultural and coal mining votes.

MR. JACOBY: The miners would be disfranchised.

MR. MORAN: Fancy the member for the Swan showing his bleeding heart because the miners were to be disfranchised! The hon. member would not only disfranchise miners but the electors of Perth and Fremantle as well. These seats were in the old part of the country, and how could we cut out the mining portions? There was Greenbushes, and how could we tell that mining might not break out at any time in the Darling Ranges? There was mining country in the Irwin district also.

MR. PHILLIPS: There were three mines there now.

MR. MORAN: The miners could not be cut out. If in a certain part of the country one interest dominated, that interest would win; the majority should win. The four seats which he had spoken of in the South-Western Division would remain, they would have fair representation, perhaps 600 or 700 electors less than would be the common quota for the metropolitan area and the goldfields. Any way one looked at the matter this was a fairer proposal than that put forward by the Government. Whichever way one took it, minor flaws would be found; that would be the case in every scheme, but

the scheme put forward by the cross-bench party was the best proposal, and would give popular representation in the best sense. For the peace of this young rising State, and to show our faith and trust in the three-fourths majority of this State, those who came here in recent years, who had opened up every industry, we should trust them and still the agitation about redistribution. He believed this scheme would settle that agitation for some time to come. If something were not done, the cry would remain a just one that the Government were afraid to trust the people. There should be nothing between the new comers and the old comers in this State: the new comers were as much Western Australians as the old settlers; their homes were here, their interests were here, and in many cases their families were here, at any rate their destinies were here, and they had come to stay. The people he was pleading for were mostly made up of new comers, and why should the Government distrust them? They had come from democratic countries where there were fair battles between liberalism and conservatism, and as long as the Government called themselves a democratic party yet did not satisfy the bulk of the people of the State, they might go astray in times of panic. In taking the basis he had given, there would be some sham votes by members in different parts of the House. Members would vote in a certain way having previously counted heads, and then they would be able to go away and say, "I tried to get more members for Perth and Fremantle," at the same time it had been arranged with the Government that their vote should be nullified by a vote on the other side. We would have votes on this side of the House to-night on the principle, get them how we might. If it was desired to print the schedule then progress could be reported, and everyone who voted against the motion would be against the principle put forward. He desired to show the State how matters stood, he desired to show how members trusted the people. The forms of the House were at our disposal to have a free and fair discussion, but if we were treated with a conspiracy of silence we should endeavour to show that up. If we could not be met by argument but by a solid vote, then we must let that solid

vote appear as often as possible before the public.

**THE PREMIER:** During the course of last session, and again during the course of this session, we had several debates, in which we heard propounded the principles on which the Redistribution of Seats Bill should be applied; and apparently we were having again to-night a discussion covering the same ground which had been covered at least twice during the course of this session, and members never got nearer to the practical application of the principles of which we heard so much.

**MR. DAGLISH:** When was this ground covered last?

**THE PREMIER:** There were certain members who, if they proposed certain principles, assumed that others had never thought of or anticipated them. Of course there were members who appreciated knowledge on the part of others and who did not place themselves on a lofty pinnacle before the people of the State. He did not want to travel over the same ground which had been travelled over half a dozen times this session. It was to be regretted if he was not understood by every member when discussing the principle of redistribution on the second reading of the Constitution Bill, when the question of redistribution had been gone into. Since the House last met there had been a meeting of cave-dwellers who had made up their minds to propose a small scheme of their own, and a method by which they intended to distribute the votes under the Bill. One was glad to find directly these members applied themselves practically to the work, they found enormous difficulties, and even amongst their own ranks they failed to find that unanimity which they fully anticipated when they began their work. As the member for West Perth had said in his concluding remarks, one could not bring forward any scheme of redistribution that was not open to objection and attack. Any scheme of redistribution existing in any State of Australia was open to the cry from extremists that it did not adequately reflect the popular will. So far as he saw, the scheme advanced by the cave-dwellers was not based on a population basis, therefore it could not escape that criticism. He was not aware

of any State in Australia where redistribution was based purely on population. He might go farther and say that the Commonwealth Parliament did not recognise that principle under existing practice. In this House the advocates of redistribution on a population basis did not suggest it openly, but did so indirectly, and sought to make a case against the Government scheme by saying it did not give adequate representation to the popular voice. The question still was, what would be adequate and what would not? Those members said the Government scheme would give too great a power to a minority of votes in the country. Yet that objection rested and must rest on a population basis; and that being so, it was idle for them to use that argument, yet to say at the same time they were not actuated by adherence to the principle of representation on a population basis. The Bill of last year provided 47 seats for this Assembly. The Bill of this year provided three additional seats, two of them being for the goldfields and one for the agricultural interest. Under the Act at present in force there were 15 mining constituencies, and he claimed Pilbarra and the South-West Mining as mining constituencies. Pilbarra was obviously a mining district, and he had been astonished to hear some mining members in this House argue last session, though they did not openly say so this session, that Pilbarra must not be treated as a mining district because it only included a small number of electors. Pilbarra stood to-day essentially as a mining district; otherwise if it were a purely pastoral constituency it would have to be cut up amongst the adjoining electorates, instead of being treated as a separate mining constituency under the Bill. As to the South-West mining electoral district, was not the coal-miner or the tin-miner essentially a mining voter?

MR. MORAN agreed with that, but it did not alter the question of population.

THE PREMIER: The law at present provided for 15 mining electorates; the Bill proposed 17 mining electorates; but by the amending scheme there would be only 16 mining electorates.

MR. MORAN: Amongst the four in the North was Pilbarra, which the amendments did not include as a separate district.

THE PREMIER: But if Pilbarra was a mining community, why not treat it as entitled to a mining vote? Though a northern constituency, it was still a mining district. By the scheme of the Government, the number of mining members would be increased from 15 to 17; but the importance of including Pilbarra was that it affected the average number of electors per member; and why some members were so desirous not to include Pilbarra as a mining electorate but to call it a northern seat was that by taking the mining seats including Pilbarra, the average would be 2,700 electors for each seat. Comparing on the one hand Hannans with 9,000 electors, and on the other hand Pilbarra with only 800 electors, members would see that it was a distinct advance on the present system to give 17 seats to the mining constituencies as compared with 15 at present, because the additional seats would reduce the disparity between extremes as they existed hitherto. Eliminating the two additional mining votes, there was still a most important redistribution of seats by giving a more equal value to the seats inside the mining area; and one of the most important reasons why redistribution had been urged at the last general election and during the past two years was to remove gross inequalities, such as Hannans with 9,000 electors alongside of Boulder with 3,500, or North Perth with some 8,000 electors alongside a suburban electorate of 2,000. These anomalies could only be eliminated by a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and the amendments were effected in an adequate way in the Bill before the House. In addition to that, the Bill gave two more votes to the goldfields, increasing the total number from 15 to 17 members, and giving an average of 2,700 voters per member. The Golden Mile gained the two electorates of Ivanhoe and Brown Hill, the North-East Goldfields gained Kurrajong, while Mt. Burges was merged in the electorate of Yilgarn. In dealing with Collie, the Bill eliminated the tin-miners of Greenbushes, with 600 votes, which formed part of the Nelson electorate, so that in addition to having these direct mining electorates of 17 seats, there would be a strong mining influence in the Nelson electorate itself. Passing now to the metropolitan area, members

would observe what improvements were made by the Bill. We had about 13 members to 43,000 electors. We now had North Perth with 7,000 on the one hand, and Cockburn Sound with 1,300 on the other hand; and these disparities needing amendment, the Bill amended them as well as amending other disparities inside the metropolitan area. The Bill also gave the same total number of 13 seats, with an average of 3,300 voters per member. Comparing this with the goldfields, the average for the goldfields was 2,700, whilst the metropolitan average was 3,300 electors, a difference of 600 per member, the metropolitan electorates having to that extent a larger average. Indeed, the average of the metropolitan electorates ought to be larger, for two good reasons; firstly, those electorates were concentrated within an area of about 20 miles, whereas the goldfields electorates were scattered over hundreds of miles, from Peak Hill to Dundas; and for another reason, that the mining electors were producers and deserved encouragement. These were reasons why, measured by population, more representation should be given to the goldfields as compared with the metropolitan area; and he was at a loss to understand how any member could seriously propose to give to the metropolitan area the same proportion of representation per head as was to be given to the goldfields. Such a proposal passed his comprehension, but it showed the peculiar position which some members found themselves in when trying to apply their theoretical principles to the question of redistribution. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) would of course support the representation suggested in the amending scheme. The hon. member stood for Perth and Perth only, therefore he supported the amendment; but he (the Premier) could not understand how the members for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) and Hannans (Mr. Bath) could ask the House to give to Perth the same representation as was to be given to the goldfields. That was the scheme to which they pinned their faith, and it was astonishing that they had been led astray by the sophistry of the member for Subiaco. The fact remained that under this new and brilliant scheme of the cross-benches, the proposition was that the quota for

electorates should be the same on the goldfields as in the metropolitan area.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member was leaving out Pilbarra and Collie.

THE PREMIER: No. Including Pilbarra and Collie, and giving 17 seats to the mining districts, these had an average of 2,700. The 13 seats for the metropolitan area showed an average per member of 3,300. That was the Government proposition, and he maintained it was fair. Moreover, it was grossly unfair to propose to give as large a representation to members inside the metropolitan area as in the goldfields extending from Peak Hill in the North to Dundas in the South. But that was the scheme indorsed by the members for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) and Hannans (Mr. Bath). The suggestion apparently was that, say, 2,000 votes in Perth should have the same effective strength as 2,000 votes scattered between Peak Hill and Cue. Such a suggestion could not be supported save on a purely population basis. Well, if members said they wished to apply it in that way, to the detriment of the goldfields and not to the detriment of the pastoral and agricultural interests, they would have to use many arguments to convince him (the Premier) of their sincerity.

MR. JOHNSON said he would convince the Kalgoorlie people.

THE PREMIER: Hardly. If the hon. member had said he wanted the population basis applied throughout the State, that would have been comprehensible; but how could he seriously suggest that without applying that principle generally, we should give 2,700 votes, say at Peak Hill in a scattered district, the same power as we gave to 2,700 in the metropolitan area? And what was the suggestion of the cross-benches. That, while in this Bill we gave 13 votes to the metropolitan area, the new scheme would add three votes to that area, thus giving it 16. Now why should it have 16 votes in the House? Why this undue increase? Why fix on this quota of 2,690? Why should we fix a quota the only effect of which would be that in the course of a year or two either it or the number of members in the House must be increased? One could understand giving a large quota to areas like the metropolitan



district or the Golden Mile, where there were large bodies of population in comparatively small areas. We certainly should not give to them the same vote value as we gave to scattered areas such as we found on the North Murchison or in the new electorates of Kurrajong and Margaret.

**MR. MORAN :** The goldfields quota was much less if Pilbarra and Collie were included.

**THE PREMIER :** They were included. There were 17 votes including Pilbarra and Collie, and a total of 46,000 electors, which total divided by 17 gave roughly a quota of 2,700. [**MR. MORAN :** Quite wrong.] This included Pilbarra and Collie also, taking the Federal roll, and if necessary he could show the hon. member exactly how the numbers were made up for each electorate; but it was more convenient to deal with groups of numbers, as did the member for Cue. The Government in their scheme proposed not to increase the metropolitan representation, but to increase the mining representation by two votes, thus providing in the mining areas an average number of electors per member of 2,700, and for the metropolitan area an average number of 3,300. Surely 3,300 in a metropolitan constituency was quite few enough. It would be found in most cases that the number of electors in most of the constituencies was greater. The average was reduced because of one or two small electorates. But members would see that whilst the Government kept to the 13 votes, Fremantle lost one by Cockburn Sound being deleted, while Perth gained one by the addition of Balcatta, the power being thus redistributed as between those two centres. All must perceive, in dealing with the first proposition of the cave-dwellers to put in Beaconsfield, how absurd was the suggestion to add to Fremantle another electorate. We had now Fremantle, Fremantle East, and South Fremantle, containing 9,600 votes, or 3,200 per electorate; yet now, when one heard on every side and from every State of Australia a clamour for reduction of members or a strong and determined outcry against an increase, we had a proposal to reduce our quota so far as these populous centres were concerned, and by establishing a reduced quota make it as certain as night

followed day that in a few years we should have a demand for increased representation in the Assembly and an increased number of members. Members knew well that it was easy indeed to reduce the quota, but extremely difficult to increase it.

**MR. MORAN :** That was not the experience of Victoria and South Australia, which reduced their members and largely increased their quotas.

**THE PREMIER :** One's common sense showed it was very difficult to increase the quota, and easy to decrease it. He was glad this evening to note that the discussion as to the merits of this cross-bench scheme began by testing the principle in its practical application. When the suggestion was made that we should give another member to Fremantle—that the 9,600 voters should have four members—the great majority in the House must have seen that whatever were the objections against the scheme of the Government embodied in the Bill, certainly no fewer objections could be urged against the scheme now propounded by the cave-dwellers after one week's hard and vigorous effort. Now he turned to the agriculturists. An attempt had been made to put the case strongly against them by a mere manipulation of figures, a sort of electoral thimble-rigging. This was the method: there was a certain number of pastoral voters, a certain number of goldfields voters, a certain number of metropolitan; all the rest were agriculturists! For that grouping there was no justification. What right had anyone to call Albany an agricultural constituency, or Bunbury, or Geraldton?

**MR. MORAN :** Leave them out. They were common to each scheme.

**THE PREMIER :** It was necessary to deal with the agricultural vote. If Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton were to be included, then Fremantle ought to be included. The distinction was a question of degree merely. These towns were not agricultural centres, but ports. He did not include them in the agricultural group, but took the agricultural votes as being 14 under the existing Act. In the new Bill the agricultural areas would have 13 votes, showing a loss to them of one vote. Thus 13 electorates would show a total of about 18,000, or

an average of about 1,400 votes per member—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Truly a good redistribution!

MR. MORAN: As against 3,412—a difference of only 110 per cent.

THE PREMIER: The extremes being Northam 2,300, and Greenough, 1,000. He understood from the member for Cue that he placed the agricultural vote at 14 under his scheme; but under the scheme of the Government it was better than that, it was only 13. Therefore the member for Cue ought to support the Government scheme in preference to his own. If the hon. member thought that under his scheme the agricultural vote was too large, he ought to give his adhesion to the Government, for under that scheme there were only 13 agricultural members, with an average per member of 1,400 electors. He had included in the agricultural electorates Northam.

MR. DAGLISH: To bring up the average.

THE PREMIER: No; he did not want to bring up the average. He wanted to point out the theory. Although he had treated Northam as an agricultural electorate, it was essentially an urban electorate: the town votes controlled the electorate. If members objected, he was prepared to eliminate Northam. It suited his case the better, for then he would only have 12 agricultural electorates. He also included Nelson electorate, whereas in that electorate there were nearly 700 voters at Greenbushes who were tin-miners. That was, in the total number of electors of 1,500 in the Nelson electorate, which was supposed to be purely agricultural, there was a strong mining vote. Outside the mining, the metropolitan, and the agricultural members, there were the pastoral members, five in number at the present time, but it was proposed there should be three—Kimberley, Roebourne, and Gascoyne—with an average per member of 600 electors. There were the ports, Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury, which were practically the same, and then there remained the electorate of Forrest. That would contain 1,800 voters, comprising the timber hands and timber hewers in the south-western district. That was purely a Labour constituency; it could not be classed as an agricultural

electorate. As a matter of fact, the member for that electorate would be found taking his seat on the Labour bench.

MR. JOHNSON: We did not want it.

THE PREMIER: A good many men did not want things that were good for them. The Forrest electorate, he thought members would agree, could not be classed as an agricultural electorate. It was a pure Labour electorate, and he was astonished to see the Labour members objecting to the Government constructing a strong Labour electorate for them. The member returned by Forrest would more likely act in sympathy and concert with those from the goldfields than with the farmers. He understood that the member for Kalgoorlie objected to the Forrest electorate, [MR. JOHNSON: Hear, hear], and under the new scheme put forward the Forrest electorate ceased to exist. He now understood why the member proposed to give the metropolitan area so much. If we eliminated the Forrest electorate, that meant banding over Murray and Wellington to the Labour party. Then what became of the so-called gift to the agriculturists? He was at first at a loss to understand why the member for Kalgoorlie was prepared to give way on the question of larger representation to Perth. How could members seriously say they were giving seats to the agricultural members when they knew that Wellington and the Murray, if they were kept in the position in which they stood to-day, having the Forrest voters in these electorates, would return Labour members.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Wellington and Murray had not returned Labour members yet.

THE PREMIER: They went close to it last time. Under the proposed scheme it was said the agriculturists would get 14 votes, but when we began to inquire, we found that whilst it was proposed to give 14 votes to agriculturists, the new scheme really gave fewer votes than the Government gave; because by leaving the timber vote as it stood to-day, that meant taking two votes away from the agriculturists. That was why the member for Kalgoorlie agreed with the member for Subiaco.

MR. DAGLISH: What made the Government create this constituency? Was it

to get rid of the Labour vote in constituencies held by two Government supporters?

**THE PREMIER:** Several times he had pointed out why this constituency was created. We had in the Murray electorate and in the Wellington electorate a great body of electors who were employed at the timber mills. No member could represent both the farming and timber interests. Anyone so placed would occupy an invidious position.

**MR. NANSON:** What about the Minister for Lands?

**THE PREMIER:** These were two bodies of electors whose political ideas were as far as the poles asunder.

**MR. PURKISS:** That obtained in every electorate. There were timber interests in the metropolis.

**THE PREMIER:** There was no other electorate where it so obtained. A position like that was entirely unsatisfactory, and members ought to appreciate that fact, for anyone who was elected for either of those constituencies would go in by a narrow majority, and such a member would always have a strong minority opposed to him. It would be unsatisfactory to both sides to have a position like that. Whilst that was so, was it not wiser to recognise the fact? And in these two electorates there were enough voters to make three, with an average of 1,700 or 1,800 electors each. Because of the uncertainty of these electorates the Forrest electorate was created. He had made no secret of that before, and he made no secret of it now. Under the new scheme what was proposed?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Sixteen metropolitan members, 16 goldfields members, 14 agricultural members, and four northern members.

**THE PREMIER:** Let members compare that with the Government scheme, which proposed 17 seats for mining, while the amending proposal was for 16 seats.

**MR. MORAN:** The amendment proposed 18.

**THE PREMIER:** There was a difference again! One wanted to ascertain what was really the amending scheme.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The numbers were 16, 16, 14, and 4, including two seats which the Premier argued ought to be called mining seats. If called mining

seats, the total mining seats would be 18.

**THE PREMIER:** The Committee would now see why those who brought forward this scheme were using the numbers 16, 16, 14, and 4, because the contrast was less than between 16 and 12. It appeared now that the position was that the amending scheme proposed 18 seats for mining, 16 seats for Perth, 12 for country districts, and 4 for northern pastoralists.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Three for the pastoralists if Pilbarra were counted as a mining district.

**THE PREMIER:** The Government scheme proposed to give 17 seats to mining as compared with 18 proposed in the amending scheme. He supposed we should hear later where the additional mining member was to be located.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The amending scheme proposed 16 seats for mining, counting Collie and Pilbarra as mining districts, 16 for the metropolitan area, 13 for the agricultural districts, and three for the northern pastoralists.

**THE PREMIER:** Several explanations of the scheme had been given, and he had been trying to ascertain what it really was. Taking it that the scheme proposed 18 seats for mining, the Government proposed 17, which would be an average of 2,700 voters per member. He understood also the mover had laid it down that in relation to mining and to the metropolitan districts the redistribution should be on a population basis.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** On a population basis for the metropolis, and on the basis of interests and population for the goldfields.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member had set up a quota which he sought to apply to the metropolitan and goldfields districts; therefore the scheme would add one more seat for the goldfields, and apparently that seat would be given to the Golden Mile, to the compact mining district of Hannans; but what would be the benefit of giving increased representation to the Golden Mile, a populous mining district, and increased representation to Perth, a populous district within a comparatively small area of 20 miles, whilst other portions of the State, the scattered goldfields or the scattered agricultural districts, were to suffer for the

purpose of giving increased representation to the closely-settled metropolis and to the closely-settled Golden Mile? If members wanted to adopt a population basis in the metropolitan area, there were 13 seats given by the Government scheme, averaging 3,300 votes per member. It was suggested to add three more seats, giving 16 members to 43,000 electors and reducing the average below 3,300. If there was to be in growing populous centres like the Golden Mile and the metropolitan area an average below 3,300 electors per member, we should be accepting a quota that would give a large House and would soon lead to urgent demands, as population grew, for increase of electorates in proportion as population increased. These were the two points of difference. Then passing to the agriculturists, the Government proposed 14 seats in addition to Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton, while the amending scheme proposed 13, with this difference that the 13 included Albany, Bunbury, and Geraldton, if these three were agricultural seats; or if they were not agricultural seats, the scheme would give only 10 members to agricultural constituencies. How would the 10 seats work out? Two of them, Murray and Wellington, might be anybody's seats, and the mover of the amendment would be the last to say they were safe agricultural seats.

MR. MORAN did not agree that they were agricultural seats.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member did not agree, why were these branded as agricultural seats?

MR. MORAN: They were not branded.

THE PREMIER: Members would see that under this scheme 18 seats were given to the goldfields, 16 to the metropolitan area, and 10 to agriculturists, eight of the ten being certain seats and two uncertain; so that the scheme would give eight seats to the agriculturists, with two others that were uncertain, and which might belong to the agricultural or to the Labour vote. He could understand the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) bringing forward a scheme of that kind—that was his line of politics; but was there any other member who would ask this House to adopt a scheme like that? The second industry in this State was to have 8 representatives in

this House, as against 18 for the goldfields and 16 for the metropolitan area. These inequalities should be evident to members; and though the figures might sound very plausible when pronounced quickly, still examining them would show that the scheme meant 18 members for the goldfields, a great majority of these being given to the populous centre. The new seat was to be given not to the scattered areas on the goldfields that might need more representation, but it was to add to the strength of the Golden Mile. The scheme would give 16 members to the metropolitan area comprised within 20 miles, and eight members to the agricultural districts (with two seats not distinctly agricultural or Labour seats), also three seats to the pastoral industry. The Government proposed to give 14 seats to agriculture, while the leaders of the new party proposed to give eight to agriculture. This was the difference between the two schemes, and he wanted members of the House and people in the country to understand the difference. We were to adopt this new scheme of giving agriculture eight certain seats and two uncertain, giving to Perth 16 seats and to the goldfields 18 seats, both these groups given to populous centres, also three other seats given to the northern area. One heard a good deal about the desire of having equal representation.

MR. BATH: The Premier himself said a good deal about that at one time.

THE PREMIER: No one ever heard him say a word about equal representation on a population basis. In what part of Australia was there a system of representation without having inequalities more or less glaring? New South Wales was supposed to have an automatic system of increasing the members in proportion to increase of population in the several districts; but even that automatic system of increase produced inequalities, some of them glaring. Even in New South Wales there were inequalities.

MR. BATH: These were periodically remedied.

THE PREMIER: By giving increased representation.

MR. BATH: No; by rearranging the boundaries.

THE PREMIER: That meant increased representation; but even if automatic re-

arrangement was satisfactory in New South Wales, we ought to avoid such a method in this State. The dominance of Sydney over the other electorates was bad for that country; and he trusted Perth would never similarly dominate Western Australia. That system might appeal to theoretical logicians like the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson); but no practical man adopted such a principle. If one believed in representation on population basis, support that; but none in the House would say that he believed in such representation, though some insinuated that they did by interjections like that of the member for the Murchison, who asked whether popular government was a bad thing. Take Broken Hill in New South Wales, with 3,400; and compare that with a town electorate of 4,129. There was no attempt in New South Wales to apply a quota alike to goldfields and metropolitan areas. And to show farther contrasts in the same State, there was Balmain South with 4,000 and Bowral with 1,856.

MR. BATH: A readjusting Bill was about to pass.

THE PREMIER: Deal with present and not with future conditions. Tenterfield, Tweed, and Wentworth had about 1,800 each. These figures were from the *Year Book*. Take Queensland. In the representation of Brisbane something like the system of the cave-dwellers was adopted. The quota had been cut down. Here he wished to increase the quota. Brisbane South had 4,000 electors returning two members, a quota of 2,000. Brisbane North had two members for 3,000 odd electors. But we found other Queensland electorates with less than 800 voters; and the northern electorate, Carpentaria, had only 665.

MR. TAYLOR: But a very large area.

THE PREMIER: Proving his statement that in no part of Australia was the population basis accepted. Some glaring inequalities were found in South Australia. Its electorates returned three, four, or five members; but he had taken out the number of voters per member, and it ranged from 5,000 and 5,200 in Adelaide, which with 20,000 electors returned four members, to the Northern Territory with 654 voters and two members. In Victoria the Constitution

had recently been amended; but the Redistribution Act was not yet in force. In that State we found electorates like Essendon with 6,400 voters, Fitzroy, a suburban electorate of the same class, with 3,400, Melbourne with 2,700, and Richmond with 3,200. The suburban electorates varied from 6,400 to 2,700.

MR. DAGLISH: These anomalies did not exist when the redistribution was made.

THE PREMIER: The electorate of Windermere had 1,586 and Normanby 435. As a fact, in any possible scheme of redistribution one could find inequalities by applying the principle of representation on a population basis. The only remedy was to effect a fair compromise by using common sense; and members ought to have a sufficient knowledge of the requirements of the State to be able to do justice to its various interests and industries. Gold-mining was our most important industry to-day, and the Bill gave it an increase of two votes, no other industry being similarly favoured. The seats representing that industry were redistributed, more adequate power given to the populous centres, and some of the inequalities as far as possible removed. Next in present importance, and of equal importance for the future, was the agricultural industry; and by the Bill it would receive 13 votes. But the leaders of the new movement suggested that the agriculturists should have only eight certain seats and two uncertain—10 in all. Would that be fair representation?

MR. MORAN: That was the Premier's interpretation.

THE PREMIER: No. The Government proposed to give the agriculturists one-fifth of the representation in this House. Surely in every Australian Parliament the agriculturists had at least a fifth of the representation in the Lower House, if not in most Lower Houses considerably more. Here we were depending on those two main industries; we were not likely to have a big industrial population; and we were seriously asked by this scheme, emanating from the members for Murchison and West Perth, to cut down agricultural representation to 10 votes, of which two were uncertain, for the purpose of giving, not increased representation to the goldfields only, but

one seat as a sop to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) and another couple to the member for Subiaco. He hoped the Committee would stand by the schedule as printed. If, however, members thought differently, he would be glad to give the leaders of the new movement an opportunity to submit a better scheme.

**MR. DAGLISH:** The Premier imparted to his remarks unnecessary feeling. Those responsible for the member for Cue's amendment indorsed that hon. member's remarks, and did not desire to attack the Government. He (Mr. Daglish), while not objecting to being called a cave-dweller, wished the Premier would show more originality in the adoption of his epithets. He objected to the Premier's accusation that those responsible for the amendment lacked unanimity. He knew of no such want of union, nor of anything in the Premier's speech likely to cause it. The Premier had tried to convince the goldfields that it was disadvantageous to them to get an extra seat; for that was one difference between the scheme of the member for Cue and the scheme of the select committee. The Premier laboured hard to convince the goldfields that it was much better for them to have 15 representatives than 16, and that just because the metropolitan districts would get a larger representation under the amendment the goldfields would suffer some loss. He was not in this Chamber as an advocate for the people of the metropolitan area or any other part of the State to the exclusion of other sections. He was an advocate for representation for the people only, and if there was any possibility of getting fair representation for population alone he would support that while we had a second Chamber. He did not know any fairer proposition than that the taxpayers of the State should have an equal vote in the legislation we passed. From whom was our authority for representation derived, if not from the people. The Premier indorsed the principle a few years ago that the people had the right to control our destinies, that was when the Premier was leading the battle of "the Bill to the people." He did not argue "the Bill to the constituencies" or that the people in the agricultural districts should have three or four times the voting power

of the people in the goldfields or metropolitan districts. If he had brought forward that argument his fight in favour of Federation would have been absolutely unsuccessful. The Premier regarded the fight for Federation as a fight in the direction of progress, and he achieved it by means of a population vote pure and simple; but to-day the Premier said the power he gave to the people on the question of Federation was a power which it was not safe to give them on any other subject that might come before the House. Hon. members were here to represent solely the people of the State, the manhood and womanhood of the country. We were not here to represent interests at all, the other Chamber being intrusted with the representation of interests. It was an insult to the representatives of our various interests in another place to argue that it was necessary in this Chamber to consider them at all. Likewise it was absurd to argue that the taxpayers in the metropolitan and goldfields districts should have a less claim to consideration and to political power than the taxpayers in the agricultural districts of the State. The old principle advocated by writers on political economy was that taxation and representation should go hand in hand. That apparently seemed good to them, but because it was argued here to-night, members were told that they were taking up a ridiculous position. The Premier had quoted a few instances in regard to obsolete distribution in other States. The Premier could have come down with a Bill to the Assembly proposing to give double the representation to metropolitan constituencies than was given country constituencies, and he could have found absolute justification in the other States for that proposal. He (Mr. Daglish) did not advocate something devised during the last few days, but he intended to support the platform that he submitted to his electors at the last general election. That platform was to support the principle of redistribution approximately on a population basis. He recognised then as he recognised to-day the need there was to consider territory, he recognised that we should make allowance for scattered electorates, but he did not recognise then and he did not recognise to-day that there was need to consider scattered agricultural residents

more than scattered mining electors. If the Premier chose to improve on the scheme submitted by the member for Cue by taking one member from a scattered agricultural district and giving that one member to a scattered goldfields electorate, he would support the Premier in that. If necessary he would go farther in order to get a popular representation by sacrificing a metropolitan member and giving him to a goldfields district. He was prepared to agree to a modification of the scheme introduced by the member for Cue. The Premier was careful to argue that Pilbarra was a goldfields constituency. We might just as fairly add the three northern constituencies, with their sparse population, to the agricultural interest, because the two interests were identical. It was shown time after time by the votes in this Chamber that the two interests were identical; but he did not want such fictitious cases as the Premier brought before them to-night by joining the two interests. The point at which the Premier most cavilled was that on which members had accepted the proposals of the committee fathered by the Premier himself. He would not argue in regard to how many members the agricultural districts got, or whether Bunbury was purely a port or an agricultural electorate. He was not prepared to go into a discussion on those matters, as they were not vital to the issue. They were so if the Premier's argument in favour of representation of interests was accepted. A great deal had been said about the wisdom of establishing the Forrest electorate. He could not understand on what principle the Premier acted in that regard. It was not put forward on principle at all, but as a matter of expediency which was to save the Labour party getting two possible seats instead of one. Wishing to give the Labour party one seat in order to keep down their strength, therefore the Premier cut out labour from these two seats in this already over-represented district. The Labour party last session were told time after time that there should be a measure of compromise adopted in order to secure any chance of redistribution passing another place. He was one member who agreed to a compromise to secure the passage of the Bill through another place.

A large number of members was prepared to accept a compromise in order to improve the existing conditions, but we found as the result there was to be no compromise whatever accepted. He was prepared to stand firm and resist any compromise until the last moment, in order that we might put on record without any doubt whatever the full demands we were entitled to make. He was sure we would not put forward a stronger demand than that in the amendment of the member for Cue. He was willing to take that as the best compromise which it was hoped could be got from this Chamber. He did not know if it was possible to get even that compromise. He would show a few reasons why substantial improvement should be made in the existing conditions. Last Parliament passed a patch-work Redistribution of Seats Bill precisely on the same lines as the measure before this Chamber. The measure gave as little redistribution as possible, and gave the country as little as the country could be induced to accept without any great amount of trouble. The country refused to accept that redistribution, and almost every member who came into this Chamber was pledged to another redistribution of seats. The country recognised that the patch-work proposal was absolutely of no use, and that if a measure on the lines of the Bill before us were passed, next Parliament would come back with the same cry, pledged to a new redistribution. As long as we were tinkering with the business instead of taking it on some principle, every Parliament would see a similar struggle for the rights of the people and the same difficulty in achieving any result. At the present time 12 members represented a majority of the electors of the State; 14 members represented a total of 65,872 electors out of 115,393 electors. These 14 members were the members for Boulder, Claremont, East Fremantle, South Fremantle, Guildford, Hannans, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Menzies, Mt. Margaret, East Perth, North Perth, West Perth, Perth, and Subiaco. The average number of electors each member represented was no less than 4,705. Against these there were 36 members who jointly represented a minority of 4,952 electors. Could any member

of the Committee seriously justify that, could anyone seriously advocate that we should continue to have such a startling anomaly as that revealed, when 14 members, representing an absolute majority of the electors, were swamped in this House by 36 members representing a minority of 16,000 electors? The Bill would make only a small difference in this respect, for as the schedule came from the select committee, instead of 14 members representing 65,872 electors out of a total of 115,393, there would be 18 members representing 65,872 electors, or one member for every 3,659 electors. That was the quota as regarded those 18 members, and there would be a balance of 32 members representing 49,521, electors, or one member for every 1,547 electors. That would really be the condition of affairs if the Bill were passed as it stood, and there would still be the glaring anomaly of 18 members representing a majority of 65,872 electors. In the Perth metropolitan district, of which the Premier had spoken considerably this evening, we found that the constituencies totalled 25,030 electors, namely Perth 2,463, East Perth 3,243, North Perth 7,031, West Perth 6,059, Subiaco 4,454, South Perth 1,789, or a total of 25,039, electors, averaging 4,173 for each member, although one of these constituencies contained only 1,789 electors. The Perth metropolitan district under the new schedule in the Bill had one electorate added; in other words, it would have seven members for 25,030 electors, or one member for every 3,561 electors. He invited special attention to the South-Western district as treated in the Bill, for it was to have the following electorates — Bunbury 1,682, Murray 2,118, Nelson 787, South-West Mining 2,243, Sussex 1,114, and Wellington 2,113, or a total of 10,057 electors for six members, the average being 1,676 electors. Here we saw that the Perth metropolitan district with six members for 25,039 electors, side by side with the South-Western district having also six members for less than half the number of electors; yet it was proposed to add to the South-West another member. In other words, that district, which was compact and had an average of only 1,676 electors per member, was to have the average brought down by the addition of another

member, or one member for 1,432 electors. The difference in the quota of a metropolitan member and a South-West member would be 2,100; yet this Bill was lauded by the Premier as a fair attempt to grapple with the awkward problem of redistribution of seats on an equitable basis. If the population of Subiaco were in the South-West district, the people would then have three members instead of one according to this treatment; and this was the position as between the metropolitan district and the South-West under conditions that found favour with the Government and with the select committee which had revised the schedule. In the goldfields districts we found that in Kalgoorlie and Boulder there were three seats, Kalgoorlie having 4,464 electors, Boulder 3,377 electors, and Hannans 9,670 electors, making a total of 17,511 electors, which with three members represented one for 5,837 electors. Under the proposals of the Government these electorates would get two additional seats, one for Brown Hill and one for Ivanhoe, giving a total of five seats, or one member for 3,822 electors. There the quota was nearly three times that of the South-West district, yet we were told this was an equitable proposal! Those members who ventured to cavil and stand up for a more equitable representation were called cave-dwellers, and other epithets were hurled at them. Going to the Southern district, we found there were five seats, namely Beverley 1,177, York 1,292, Plantagenet 1,328, Williams 2,196, and Albany 1,585, with a total of 7,578 electors. These districts had five members under existing conditions, being one for every 1,515 electors. Under the proposals in the Bill there were still to be five members, the Plantagenet electorate being replaced by the Katanning electorate; and if the Government proposal were accepted, the quota would be the same as at present, namely one member for 1,515 electors in the South, as against one member for every 3,577 electors in the metropolitan district, and one for every 3,822 in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts. It was not necessary to say more in justification of the amendment which had been proposed. The present schedule was absolutely unfair, not only to the metropolis but to the goldfields. That schedule was



not based on any representation either of interests or population. Where it suited the Government to represent interests, there interests were represented; and where it suited the Government to adopt a certain quota for having population represented, there the quota was adopted; but there was no rule whatever. A special rule had been made for every special case. There was the new electorate named "Forrest," put in the Bill because there was an unpleasant Labour element in two of those constituencies: it was absurd to say this was not the real reason for making that change. Every metropolitan member had to represent not only two classes but often half a dozen different interests, some of them conflicting, yet he had to represent them all; and if the same principle were to be applied to metropolitan members for avoiding conflicting interests, then in the case of the member for West Perth those electors residing on Mount Eliza would have to be excluded, and the hon. member would have to represent only those on the flat. More effort should be made to have the people represented in the people's House; and because this schedule did not make any effort in that direction it was bad, and he would do his best to defeat it, or to amend it in such direction as that indicated in the proposal of the member for Cue.

[A pause ensued.]

MR. NANSON: It was not surprising that members supporting the Government were loth to follow the speech of the member for Subiaco. The Premier had given us a speech this evening full of very indirect argument, full of very sophistical special pleading. But looking to the basis of that speech, looking at the foundations and the premises of the speech, it would be seen that all through there was a resolute endeavour, skilfully carried out, to avoid the main issue and to mislead members of the Committee. Again and again the Premier endeavoured to throw dust in the eyes of hon. members, and instead of giving us the main issue he involved the question in a whirl of figures, in which it was possible to discern only the one intention of confusing what should be clear, and making it difficult to understand. The member for Subiaco had laid down clearly what should be the

principles determining redistribution of seats in the popular Chamber. When the Council schedule was under discussion, we were told by the Premier that the Council represented interests. We had learned to-night from the Premier that this Chamber was also to represent not the popular voice, not population, but purely to represent interests. That was the burden of the argument all through. It was for that purpose the numerous figures he quoted were introduced, and it was impossible to escape the conclusion that the Premier had no trust at all in the great basic principle of popular government, trust in the people. The Premier evidently thought that this country could not be safe unless the minority ruled. The dominant feature of the second schedule as it stood was distrust of the people. As to the scheme originated on the cross-benches, much was said by the Premier to confuse the definitions employed in explaining that scheme. But the scheme recognised the fact that in this country the constituencies fell into three natural groups; the first being those with comparatively large populations, the second those moderately populous, the third those of which we had examples in the pastoral districts in the far North, whose population was meagre. No matter what names we gave to those three classes, if the Lower House constituencies were thus divided it could not be contended that the scheme of the cross-benches was not infinitely fairer to the basic principle of popular government than was the Government scheme. The scheme of the cross-benches proposed to give the metropolitan and the mining constituencies 32 members, representing on the average a quota of 2,700 votes; for the agricultural constituencies the quota was fixed at 2,000, and for the pastoral at 700. One might infer from the Premier's remarks that this was a revolutionary idea, and would mean representation on a purely population basis. Looking through the scheme of representation in the other States, and comparing it with this scheme, we found this more liberal to agricultural voters than any other scheme in vogue in Australia. Why should the feeling exist that the people of this State were not sufficiently broad-minded to be trusted to take a patriotic view of public affairs, that the people in

the larger areas were utterly unable to grasp the great truths that the different interests of the country were practically identical, that the great towns could not possibly prosper while mining and agriculture were waning? Surely people who had grasped these elementary truths could be safely given a larger share of representation than the second schedule of the Bill contained. Some said the Government proposal went far enough for the present. In the past much had been heard of ill-feeling between goldfields and coast, and between the larger centres of population and the agricultural districts. Surely members perceived that unless the inequalities of representation were more effectively removed than they would be by the Bill, its effect would be to intensify the inequality between the agricultural districts and the larger centres, and to heighten the ill-feeling of the past. Why should the Premier develop, with apparent suddenness, such strong suspicions as to the wisdom of the majority? During the Federal campaign the Premier was willing to try the most democratic expedient possible, a mass referendum of the people; yet a moderate proposal like this, which could not affect any issue nearly so serious as that of Federation, inspired the Premier with intense distrust. Those who suggested that the cross-bench scheme went too far should remember that a moderate policy of compromise and justice was the wisest in the long run. The direct Government and direct Opposition supporters, having in this matter formed an alliance, would most probably be in a majority when the amendment was put; but he urged them to forget for a short time the atmosphere of the House and of their individual constituencies, to look at what had happened in all the great democratic countries in the world where the principle of popular government flourished most freely, to compare the position there with the position here, and ask themselves whether the amendment demanded anything dangerous or unjustifiable. If they answered "yes," and the great towns and the goldfields were not provided with larger powers than the schedule would confer, then those members branded themselves as conservative and reactionary to an extent not witnessed for many years

in Australia. It was significant that no member of the direct Opposition had yet spoken; and this might be said of several members representing the larger constituencies. They should state whether they subscribed to the Premier's principle that the large electorates could not be trusted, and that the people in the towns were of a lower order of intelligence than the country people. Surely each class of elector was equally patriotic and far-seeing. He (Mr. Nanson) had successfully pleaded the cause of redistribution before his electors at the Murchison, and the voters in many country districts were infinitely more progressive and liberal than their representatives. Would not the member for Boulder (Hon. J. M. Hopkins), who last year was so valiant a champion of the larger constituencies, justify his change of front?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Would the hon. member justify his own?

**MR. NANSON:** Immediately, if it could be shown that he had changed. There could be no objection to a change of opinion on redistribution if a reason were given; but although repeatedly challenged, the Minister had never explained why he belonged to a Ministry that had somersaulted on this question of popular representation.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Was that a bit of Gladstone also?

**MR. NANSON:** The hon. member could quote Gladstone if he liked, but he need not think that by little pert interruptions he could direct attention from his great apostasy. It was incumbent on the Minister for Lands to explain how it was that when he was out of the Government he enunciated certain principles, and after taking a place in the Government he went back on his principles. One felt sure the country expected that of him. The country liked a certain amount of consistency, or if not consistency it liked reasons why politicians changed their opinions. If we looked into the schedule proposed by the Government we found it was a weapon intended, if we argued from the premises of the Premier, that everyone was dominated by self-interest; and he was entitled to use the Premier's argument to that extent. We found the schedule as a weapon with which to farther aggrandize the south-west, the eastern and the great southern agricul-

tural districts at the expense of the northern portion of the State, more particularly the northern agricultural portion. Looking back to the history of the country since the adoption of responsible government, the northern areas could better depend on the members representing the goldfields and the metropolitan areas than on the members who were returned by the agricultural districts in the south-west and along the Great Southern Railway and the eastern districts, because although it might seem a hard thing to say, the votes of the members representing those districts had, if we looked back on their past actions, always gone to push forward the south-west, the eastern, and the great southern agricultural districts, and scandalously and hopelessly against the north.

HON. F. W. PIESSE: That was denied.

MR. NANSON: Facts were stubborn things, and he said without hesitation that one would not find one man out of every hundred in the north-west district who did not believe what he (Mr. Nanson) had said. We recognised the great ability, talent, and patriotism generally displayed by Sir John Forrest, yet the great grievance against Sir John Forrest when in power was that he again and again excluded the north, and did everything he could to push forward the south-west, the country along the Great Southern Railway, and the eastern districts; therefore members who represented the northern agricultural interest were justified in assuming that they could lean with a greater sense of security on members who represented large towns on the coast and on the goldfields. We had been told by the Premier that it was impossible to bring forward a scheme that could be adequate. That was a very safe generality that would be indorsed by every member in the Chamber; but what he contended for the scheme brought forward by the member for Cue was not that it was an absolutely perfect one, not that it was mathematically correct, but that it was more equitable and considerably less objectionable than the scheme brought forward by the Government and supported by the direct Opposition benches. He could not understand on what ground the Premier supported his own scheme save on the one assumption that he believed in the

large towns, and that on the goldfields the popular vote was not to be depended on to do justice. If we looked back a little time the Premier used to have a very different opinion of the agricultural voter. When the Premier was fighting the battle of Federation and urging "the Bill to the people," he described the agriculturist as a person who had the soul of a potato and the heart of a cabbage. We were entitled to ask if the Premier, who was then speaking with the voice of conviction, considered it was a wise thing if he held to those views still, that we should give the balance of power, in this State to the agricultural vote, to people whom he described as having the soul of a potato and the heart of a cabbage. But we in this House knew the reason of the Premier's confusion, we knew why he renegaded on all the principles he used to enunciate on this side of the House. The Premier was out after a stable majority, and from his study of the past he was more likely to obtain that majority by appealing to the conservative section of the House than by appealing to that section who were not afraid of the people and of constitutional progress. It was merely for this reason and not because of a conviction on that subject that he had abandoned the principle of democracy, and attempted to persuade the Committee that this principle was no longer of any account, but only something to be used as a vent for his humour and no longer worthy of respect. One would like to hear the Premier deliver a similar speech before a popular gathering; one would like to hear the Premier argue, as he did to-night, in his own constituency that the people in the metropolis were less intelligent than in small constituencies. One would like the Premier to argue as he did to-night that the people in the large constituencies were more selfish than in the small constituencies. For his part, while he recognised that it would be impossible at the present stage to give representation purely on a population basis, we could go much farther than was proposed in the schedule to which the Government had given their support. We might go at any rate to those moderate lengths proposed by the member for Cue, and although it might suit other members to predict in conversation that if we went to those lengths disaster

would follow, yet we must bear in mind that while an attempt had been made to widen the power of the Bill and to give to the people as a whole the dominant voice in the affairs of the country, there had always been these predictions of disaster, but they had never been accomplished. The members proposing this moderate compromise were in their hearts dominated precisely by the same arguments as dominated the tory party in England in 1832 when opposing the first Reform Bill. We had in this House the forces of progress on the one hand and the forces of reaction on the other, those who believed in the wisdom of the people as a whole in the long run and those who could not trust the people. If this schedule went forth as the Government wished it to go forth, we had a blow aimed at popular government by those who were obliged to maintain it, because the whole previous political career of the Premier had been in defence of those political rights for which on the cross-benches he pleaded so earnestly. Those members who joined in the debate and who wished to confuse the Committee by quoting serried rows of figures did so to prove that the scheme put forward by those on the cross-benches was unfair to the mining constituencies and gave too much to the metropolitan areas. We should leave out all the intricate calculations in which the Premier indulged, and allow ourselves to be guided by the principle so often advocated and never yet permanently defeated in this country, that the people must rule. If we allowed ourselves to be guided by that principle, members of the Committee would support the compromise of the member for Cue, not because it gave everything asked for, but because it went a farther distance in the direction we had a right to go than that put forward by the Government and supported by those sitting on the front Opposition benches.

MR. BATH: The member for Kalgoorlie and himself should be deeply grateful to the Premier for his tender solicitude on their behalf in saying that, because of their youth and inexperience, they were led astray by the members for West Perth and the Murchison. Even if he (Mr. Bath) had that youth and inexperience, he was prepared to rely on his own resources, so far as the Bill was

concerned. He would infinitely prefer to rely on his own principle of redistribution of seats and on his public career as an advocate of redistribution, than depend on the scheme propounded by the Premier for doing justice to the populous portions of Western Australia. On every occasion on which this matter had cropped up for discussion, particularly on the Constitution Bill when the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) had moved to add two seats in order to give them to the agricultural areas, and again on the second reading of the Bill it had been pointed out that there was an overwhelming difficulty to be encountered in order to adjust the seats on an equitable basis. Whence did this difficulty arise? The House had decided what we considered should be the basis of representation, whether on a popular basis or as nearly as possible to it, with a certain amount of consideration for interests and territory; but whence had the difficulty arisen that confronted the select committee, having all the advantage of the assistance of the Surveyor General, and maps and other information, to so adjust the electors in the State as to carry out the scheme agreed upon by the House? The select committee intrusted with that task had come forward with a wholly inadequate scheme, and told us that the difficulties of the situation prevented their giving us a more satisfactory scheme. He (Mr. Bath) was strongly of opinion that population should be primarily considered; but, in deference to the newness of the State and to the fact that outlying portions had many difficulties to contend with, that they had not those means of communication which other portions of the State enjoyed, and that there were large territories to be covered, the House had decided, and he thought reasonably so, to give to those parts a certain amount of consideration. Precisely the same difficulties had cropped up in the case of New South Wales, which had been spoken of by the Premier as an example where they had failed, when setting out to allot seats on a population basis, to carry out the system in its entirety. When the Redistribution of Seats Bill was brought down in New South Wales, from the pages of *Hansard* he could quote speeches made similar in

tone to those of the member for the Williams and the Premier. There was this difference, that at the same time the leader of the acknowledged conservative party was the gentleman who brought down the proposal to give more equitable redistribution, and the gentleman who opposed it was the leader of the so-called liberal party. In New South Wales they followed the example of New Zealand, where a scheme had been evolved to give consideration to population, with a proviso that a margin should be allowed, not to exceed 15 or 18 per cent., to certain districts. It was found workable there, and in New South Wales the scheme was brought down by the Attorney General, then Mr. Edmund Barton, Sir George Dibbs being the leader of the Opposition. At that time precisely similar anomalies existed as existed in Western Australia at the present time. There were the Sturt electorate with 8,000 electors, and the Wilcannia electorate with 1,067 electors. Other instances could be given of anomalies that existed. The leader of the conservative Government brought down a scheme to base redistribution on a more equitable basis. The proposal would have commended itself to this House if the Minister in charge had brought down a similar proposal, which was to hand over the duty of cutting up the State into electorates to a Board of Commissioners appointed by Parliament, which was to submit its report to Parliament. The result was that in New South Wales the State was, in the first instance, cut up into constituencies with an almost equal number of electors. There was also a scheme that, when anomalies again occurred through population changing from one electorate to another, a certain automatic redistribution should take place every three years. That rule was in force in New South Wales at the present time. If a similar condition appertained to New South Wales at the present time as obtained in Western Australia, the time was not far distant when adjustment would take place in that State according to the law. But in Western Australia we had a Government, deputed with the duty of allotting seats on an equitable basis and with a sufficient majority to carry it into effect, saying that they found

the duty too great for them, and that they could only bring in a scheme which very barely reduced the emphasis of the inequity of redistribution, and that they were powerless to do anything better for the community. If the proposal submitted by the cross-benches was carried, and if the scheme was relegated to a select committee with all the assistance the previous select committee had at their disposal, there would not be the slightest difficulty in reallotting seats. While a certain amount of attention would be given to population, interests, and territory, the scheme would be just, and the electorates would be distributed on a basis satisfactory to the whole of the community. Instead of that, however, the Government, having a majority consisting largely of agricultural members, brought down a scheme which we desired to amend. So far as goldfields and popular representatives were concerned, hon. members knew that in the past agricultural members had always been opposed to giving populous centres anything like equitable representation; and in carrying out and continuing their previous attitude they opposed popular representation at the present time. Probably they laboured under the delusion that, if populous centres had fair and equitable representation, members for the goldfields and coastal constituencies would turn round and avenge themselves on them. They need have no such fear. Although these members might take into consideration the inequalities of the past, they had always afforded to the agricultural members full and generous support; and at the present time if agricultural members would withhold the opposition of the past and agree to something like a fair mode of representation, they need not fear that members for populous centres would act harshly towards them. Many of the misunderstandings of the past would be swept away, never to return, if they allowed these populous centres fair and equitable representation. The Premier had stated there were two seats, one included in the pastoral area and one included in the agricultural area, which could only be considered as mining seats. Accepting the Premier's view of the situation that Pilbarra and Collie were mining seats, it made the position of the supporters of

the scheme propounded by the cross-benches stronger than ever. It would mean that the quota for mining constituencies would be 2,560 and for the metropolitan area 2,687, showing a difference in favour of the goldfields, and making that concession to the goldfields areas which the Premier desired and upon which he had laid such great stress. It would also mean that the agricultural districts would have one man to every 1,950 voters. Surely this was concession enough to an industry such as agriculture, which was well established at the present time. Then again there were three pastoral seats with a quota of 771. From that light, therefore, the position of the cross-bench scheme was infinitely stronger. Under the scheme of the Government the constituency which he (Mr. Bath) represented was divided into three, and although he had received a fair amount of consideration, he looked at the matter apart from the interests of his constituency and regarded it from the interests of the whole of the State. He was prepared to fight right through for more equitable representation for the whole of the State, irrespective of the portion he represented. Although the Premier had said his own scheme was open to criticism, less criticism of an adverse nature could be applied to the scheme propounded by the cross-benches than to that the Premier had propounded.

**THE PREMIER:** That depended upon the point of view of the critic.

**MR. BATH:** The Premier looked at it from the point of view of his majority. Speaking of the danger of a Ministry with a conservative majority at its back, he would read the remarks of one who was leader of the conservative party in New South Wales at the time he had mentioned. Dealing with the criticism of his scheme to hand over the work of allotting the seats to a board of commissioners, the criticism being that he was taking the work out of the hands of Parliament, Sir Edmund Barton, who was Attorney General in the Dibbs Ministry and brought down the redistribution of seats scheme, said we might provide that the first commissioners should be appointed for three or four years, and then that others should be appointed; but he for his part failed to see why, if the

mode of appointment was satisfactory, there should be any necessity for limiting their operations. If, said he, the redistribution of seats was left to be carried out by the Ministry, that was to say by the officers of the Ministry alone, subject to ministerial responsibility to Parliament, they might land themselves in this difficulty, that if the Ministry of the day had a majority they might carry out the redistribution of seats in any way they pleased; therefore within the limits prescribed by the Act it would be perfectly competent for any Ministry to lend themselves to the process known in America as "jerryandering."

**THE PREMIER:** Why not test that by experience?

**MR. BATH:** That proposal was brought forward in 1893 in the Parliament of New South Wales.

**THE PREMIER:** That was 10 years old.

**MR. BATH:** It was brought forward in 1893 and adopted by that Parliament, and had been in active operation ever since. It had not been superseded, and it had been found to work satisfactorily. The fact that we had left this to a Ministry which had a majority at its back had landed us in precisely the same difficulty as was foreshadowed by Sir Edmund Barton at that time.

**THE PREMIER:** Did the hon. member say that the system had worked satisfactorily?

**MR. BATH:** Yes.

**THE PREMIER:** Then how did the hon. member account for the fact that one electorate had 4,000 voters and another 1,800 voters?

**MR. BATH:** In a very short time that would be adjusted by the commissioners in accordance with the Act which had been passed. We could not prevent these difficulties from occurring. We could not adjust the anomalies every year, and it was sufficient if we set a period of time, say three, four, or five years, and said that at the end of that time the boundaries must be adjusted and the anomalies which had cropped up remedied. Here in Western Australia we left this matter to the end of every Parliament, and the Ministry at that time in power brought up a scheme altogether inadequate for the work. The Ministry would have done infinitely

better if they had come forward with such a scheme as he had referred to, and it would have been evidence of an earnest desire for redistribution on a more equitable basis. In his argument on redistribution of seats the Premier referred to certain constituencies which we had included in farming areas as being something outside agriculture. He said that there were two constituencies in which the power between certain sections of the community was so evenly balanced that it might possibly be a labour constituency or be a farming constituency. So far as those constituencies were concerned, even supposing they returned labour members, those members would be just as capable and earnest in their advocacy of the interests of farming as would men returned by farmers as their own representatives. He could point to instances in New South Wales where labour members had been returned by pastoral constituencies, and it had been through the labour members in New South Wales that those pastoralists secured justice. Pastoralists there were labouring under disadvantages for years, though they had their representative pastoralists in Parliament, and it was only when the Labour party came along that matters were adjusted.

**THE PREMIER:** Supposing there were a constituency in which the Labour party was on one side and the farmers on another, and they almost balanced, would the Labour section nominate their own man or support a farming candidate?

**MR. BATH:** They would look at the issues largely on questions of vital and political principles, and not on the question whether one was a farming man or a Labour man. Even supposing they rejected the farming candidate and elected the other, did the Premier wish to say that member would be likely to go diametrically opposite to the farming interest? It was absurd on the face of it. His whole political life would depend on his advocating all the interests concerned in that electorate to the best of his ability.

**THE PREMIER:** A man who represented farming would have no possible chance of getting the support of the Labour section, because the Labour section would put up their own man.

**MR. BATH:** If they thought their own man was the better man. In many of these constituencies it was largely the personal character of the man and his personal merits which commended themselves to the electors, irrespective of party. The Premier had no right to eliminate those members, and say they were only desirous of giving eight members to the agricultural communities. Apart from that, interests were not the only thing to be considered. They were only secondary to population, and as far as the proposals were concerned there was no comparison between the scheme put forward by the Premier and that proposed by the cross-benches.

**THE PREMIER:** Hear, hear. That was why he did not approve of the cross-bench scheme.

**MR. BATH:** The Premier had alluded to cave-dwellers. That might be a slur against the cross-benches, but it was better to be cave-dwellers than to be dead and be whipped up by the leader of the Government. Some members had only their voting strength with which to qualify themselves—those who voted for expediency and not principles.

**MR. THOMAS:** In principle he personally most decidedly approved of representation strictly on a population basis, but he recognised that anything of that sort was an impossibility in Western Australia. The member who had just sat down stated that in England interests were secondary to population. Well and good. In England they had interests scattered very uniformly throughout the country, and there most certainly they could go in for a scheme of representation purely on a population basis. Some members who had spoken to-night held up New Zealand as an example to us in this matter; but in New Zealand there were not one metropolitan area but four metropolitan areas, hence there could not be a contest of town against country. Country parties had been found necessary in Queensland and South Australia because of the domineering attitude of metropolitan representatives. None of the four metropolitan areas in New Zealand could dominate, for their interests were more or less divergent; so that while representation there was practically on a population basis, there was no trouble. But in this State, with

220,000 inhabitants, practically 40 per cent. were centred in Perth, Fremantle and their suburbs; and if this schedule were on a strictly population basis, 40 per cent. of the voting power of the Assembly must be given to Perth and Fremantle. As a country member he (Mr. Thomas) would not entertain so absurd a proposal, but believed in a strict population basis when a system of decentralisation was properly carried out. In New Zealand one found the essence of decentralisation, and in England the principle was carried to its utmost limits, while here centralisation was supreme. Representatives of the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle refused to open up our various ports lest those interests might thereby suffer. Had we a mercantile centre at Geraldton controlling the trade of the Murchison fields, and similar trade centres in the extreme north, at Roebourne or Cossack, at Bunbury, at Albany, and at Esperance, so that each centre could, in the words of the Treasurer (Hon. J. Gardiner) retain to itself the trade to which its geographical position entitled it, he (Mr. Thomas) would vote for redistribution on a population basis. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) interjected that the cross-bench party did not want it on a population basis. They did in most instances, but made some exceptions; and their scheme was no whit better than that of the Government. Having regard to representation in both Houses, the cross bench scheme was, if anything, not so good as the Premier's. We read in the Press that the member for Kalgoorlie had convened a meeting of those who thought that population should receive more consideration in redistributing the seats. To that meeting he (Mr. Thomas) was invited, but refused to attend. How many and what members were invited? For information as to the proceedings he was indebted to the Press.

MR. JOHNSON: The Press reports of the meeting were absolutely incorrect.

MR. THOMAS: Which of the various leaders of this cave-dwelling party—the members for West Perth (Mr. Moran), the Murchison (Mr. Nanson), Cue (Mr. Illingworth), and Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson)—would pose as the permanent leader? In spite of their statements that

population should receive more consideration, their scheme was inconsistent. They included Pilbarra as a pastoral seat, while he included Pilbarra as a mining seat. He gave way on that point 18 months ago, when he was satisfied of the potentialities of that district. The member for Kanowna had said in the House that, not excepting the Esperance Railway, a railway in the Pilbarra district was necessary to open up the mining industry, thereby admitting that Pilbarra was a mining seat. In the scheme of the member for Cue the North was given four seats for 2,407 electors, an average of 600 electors per member. There was for the Murchison goldfields three constituencies, the Murchison, Cue, and Mount Magnet, three seats for 5,300 electors or a quota of 1,780, and three agricultural seats in that district, consisting of Geraldton, Greenough, and Irwin, comprising 3,800 electors or a quota of 1,270. For the northern districts 10 members for 11,500 electors, or a quota of 1,150. That left for the balance of the State 103,900 electors or a quota of 2,597 electors. The Eastern Goldfields under the proposed scheme were to have 13 members for 38,000 electors, or a quota of 2,900. Perth and Fremantle were to have 16 members, the quota being 2,690, and the southern districts and ports were to have 11 members for 22,350 electors, or a quota of 2,120. Why were the agriculturists in the southern portion of the State to have a quota of 2,120 while the agriculturists of Geraldton, Greenough, and Irwin were to have a quota of 1,270? That meant that it took two agriculturists in the southern province to be equal to one agriculturist in the north. He had repeatedly argued that he could not allow a scheme to go forward with his approval which necessitated three men on the goldfields being equal to one man on the coast; but this splendid democratic scheme propounded by the three leaders gave twice the quota for an agricultural member in the southern province as in the north, and so far as the goldfields were concerned the quota for the Eastern Goldfields was 2,900, while the quota for the Murchison Goldfields was 1,730. There was another anomaly that existed. We had been told that Perth and Fremantle, also Kalgoorlie, Boulder,



and Coolgardie, were practically to be considered equal. We knew full well if we took the metropolitan area, under the member for Cue's scheme the quota would be 2,600, whereas if we took the whole of the Eastern Goldfields metropolitan area the quota would be over 3,000. He could not subscribe to such a proposal as that. He knew that a good many members had seen fit to turn a complete somersault during the last few months, and they wished some battle-cry so as to justify themselves when they went before their electors. He had dissected two leaders on the last occasion he spoke, the member for West Perth and the member for North Murchison, and if he desired to weary the Committee he could thoroughly dissect the member for Cue. In July, 1902, when the member for Cue was objecting to various matters when speaking on the Address-in-reply, he then told the House what the Leake Government scheme was, a House of 42 members, 13 being given to the goldfields, which contained the paramount industry of the State. The hon. member was then careful to state to the House that he did not believe in having a Redistribution of Seats Bill on a population basis, but he thought that interests should be a paramount feature in a Redistribution of Seats Bill. He proposed 13 goldfields members with a quota of 2,770; 11 members for farming districts; seven for Perth and suburbs with a quota of 2,990; six for ports, and the definition of ports was extremely funny. The hon. member's own words were given on page 247 of *Hansard*, 29th July, 1902, volume 21. He was quoting from the member for Cue, who propounded this scheme, and who was the mouthpiece of the cave party. The hon. member proposed to give six seats to the ports, these being Fremantle, South Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, Albany, and Geraldton, and proposed that five seats should be given to the pastoralists. Under the present scheme of the Government there were sixteen seats for the goldfields, not including Collie, which could be classed as a seat for the coal-mining industry, and, allowing one seat to the timber industry there would be three for the ports, the others going to the agriculturists, while 13 went to the metropolitan area and three to the pas-

toralists. Under the scheme of the member for Cue 16 were to go to the goldfields, or 17 if Pilbarra was included, 16 to Perth and Fremantle, three to the pastoralists, and 14 to the agriculturists. The member for Cue last year proposed to give the farmers and the pastoralists 16 votes, and two votes to Albany and Geraldton, which under his present scheme were included as agricultural seats, making 18 out of 42. It was a simple matter of proportion. Out of a House of 50, under the scheme he advanced last July it would be necessary for the agriculturists and pastoralists to have a representation of 21, whereas the Government only proposed to give them 16. Members, when they were going to the country, would have to show why they had been turning complete somersaults. The hon. member who propounded the scheme should peruse his own remarks and justify his change of attitude. Under his scheme of last year the goldfields would have had 13 votes out of 42, which would not make 16 out of 50 as at present. In October of last year the member for Cue said that, although there were 9,000 people in the Hannans district, still their interests were uniform and there was no reason why the district should not be represented by one man. Right through his speech of the 30th October the hon. member showed he was opposed to any representation in Parliament being on a population basis or on any attempt at it, and that a scattered district in the Murchison, containing only a few hundred voters, was equally entitled to the same representation as 9,000 voters in the Hannans district. In fact, the hon. member proposed that Boulder should be thrown into the Hannans district, as their interests were identical. Now the hon. member had a scheme of going to the country saying "We want representation on a population basis. We want to allow the people to rule, and to put our trust in the people." It was strange that hon. members should, on the eve of a general election, come before the House and say that they knew what they were to do, when they had for years past been endeavouring to defeat attempts at redistribution on a population basis. It was only now they had raised their battle cry. All of those members had made

complete somersaults from their attitude of last year. His own position was absolutely clear and perfectly tenable. When first returned he (Mr. Thomas) was pledged to redistribution of seats strictly on a population basis; but, when he came to Perth, he saw reasons to depart from that pledge, and in one of his first speeches he announced that he was not prepared to place the interests of the goldfields in the hands of Perth and Fremantle, and that he had changed his mind absolutely on the question of redistribution, saying that he was no longer in favour of a population basis, and that he would take the first opportunity of telling his electors who, if they expressed disapproval, could obtain another member, because his resignation had been placed in the hands of the Mayor of Norseman. His attitude, therefore, was perfectly tenable in regard to this matter, because he claimed to have gone before his constituents and told them he had changed his opinion on this subject, and he was no longer in favour of a redistribution of seats on a strictly population basis. He placed himself in their hands absolutely in case they should disapprove of that, and gave them an opportunity to have another member. That being so, he claimed that he had a mandate to oppose redistribution on a strictly population basis. The majority of members here, whether representing metropolitan areas, mining interests, or the farming interests, were bound together with the one common tie that they were here to do the best they could for the interests they were sent to this House to represent. He knew it was the feeling of practically every member of the House, that they were not going to give away points in any kind of industry to help another industry, if they could avoid it. He was here as a representative of the Eastern Goldfields, and as long as he had the honour to be in the House he was going to fight his hardest on behalf of that industry, and on behalf of the Eastern Goldfields, which had at any rate been down-trodden in the past. He was not prepared to allow the destiny of the Eastern Goldfields to be placed in the hands of the residents of Perth and Fremantle. He preferred to trust himself to the votes of the country people. He knew that in this country at present

we had a policy of centralisation carried almost to starvation point. We had it throttling every other interest in Western Australia.

MR. TAYLOR: Who supported it? The "cocky" element of this Chamber.

MR. THOMAS: The "cocky" element, as the hon. member termed it, never supported it. It was because Perth and Fremantle had the dominant vote.

MR. TAYLOR: *Hansard* would prove it.

MR. THOMAS: The time had arrived in this State when a leader must arise who would go to the country and boldly advocate the policy of decentralisation for Western Australia. Such a party had not yet come into existence, though he felt satisfied that when the next election came the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott), the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), and the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), would be found on one side advocating a policy of decentralisation.

MR. TAYLOR: One would like to see the member for Dundas going to the country with the leader of the black-labour party.

MR. THOMAS said he was not going to be drawn away by interjections of that sort.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member would turn his coat before he went to the country. He had so shifted that he did not know where he was.

MR. THOMAS said he was not in duty bound to explain to the hon. member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) where he was. His duty was to explain to other people, and let the member for Mt. Margaret go before his own people and explain. He had never complained of the attitude taken by the member for Mt. Margaret, and he would ask the hon. member not to complain of any attitude he himself had taken up. The member for Mt. Margaret would take every possible opportunity when one was speaking in this House of firing a volley of interjections, whether relevant or irrelevant. When the hon. member was asked to stand up and express a straight-out opinion he would slink back, and wait always to see which way the cat was going to jump. The hon. member had not the pluck of his own convictions, and would take care to come down every time on the safe side.

MR. TAYLOR: When the hon. member spoke as straightly as he (Mr. Taylor) had done he would be a credit to the people who sent him here.

MEMBER: The member for Dundas was straight because he was on the Government side.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. THOMAS: When the member for Mt. Margaret was so careful to stand up and tell us that no man in the House was carrying out his pledges except himself, that no man was a straight-going politician except himself, he (Mr. Thomas) thought all of us would have a right to wonder whether the hon. member himself could be so straight. He (Mr. Thomas) was speaking as to whether we should give to the metropolitan areas in Perth and Fremantle the increased representation asked for by the cross-bench party. He said, "No." He would not, at any rate. He was not prepared to take one extra seat in the Lower House for the goldfields and in return for that sop give three extra seats to Perth and Fremantle. He was not prepared to consider a scheme that was to give a quota to the Eastern Goldfields of practically 3,000 electors per member, and a quota of only 2,700 per member to the metropolitan area of Perth and Fremantle. When we had a policy of decentralisation in Western Australia he would be prepared to trust the metropolitan area. If there were six or seven metropolitan areas to deal with, then on a strictly population basis the interests of every section of the community would be well looked after; but he for one was not going to vote in favour of such a scheme as would increase the number of representatives of the metropolitan areas from 13 under the proposed Bill to 16 under the scheme from the cross-benches. The goldfields were entitled to 17 members in this House out of the 50 which the House was composed of, but he recognised that it would be too big a sacrifice to get that extra member. The only way in which they could get that extra member would be to give three extra to Perth and Fremantle, and as long as his vote could be given against it he would not allow Perth and Fremantle to come in and swamp the goldfields and the country districts. The country members must at some time or

other coalesce for their own protection. So far we had had the agriculturists, the metropolitan area, and the goldfields, so the agriculturists generally came in and got the best of the fight; but the time must come for the formation of a country party, and we should see then that Perth and Fremantle were not going to dominate the country in the future as they had done in the past. He could see through the proposal, if the other members for the goldfields could not, he could see through the proposal propounded in the first instance by the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) in his speech the other night, backed up by the member for Murchison (Mr. Nanson). He could see those members were trying to drag the goldfields in to give their consent to the proposal. They said, "You cannot vote against having another extra member." The same argument had been adduced to him, that he could not vote against having another extra member for the goldfields. He would do so if, to get an extra member for the goldfields, he would have to give three to Perth and Fremantle. After a long and acrimonious debate a big meeting was held, and a fair compromise was afterwards placed before the Committee by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott), supported by the leader of the Labour party (Mr. Hastie). To that arrangement he (Mr. Thomas) had agreed, and he would stick to it. He would consent to the goldfields having 16 out of 50 members instead of 17 out of 50 in the Lower House, provided that the farmers' representatives would give an assurance that the goldfields should have one extra province in the Upper House. Under a bicameral Constitution redistribution must be effected simultaneously in both Chambers; and even if the goldfields or the agricultural interest were given every seat in the Assembly, of what use would that be if the proportionate representation in another place were unaltered? If, as had been indicated, big meetings would be held in the metropolitan district and the Eastern Goldfields in favour of the scheme of the cross-benches, he would take the platform against it, and do his best to block the proposal. For the Upper House the reasonable compromise suggested was three goldfields provinces, three agricultural and ports provinces,

three metropolitan, and one pastoral; and though he still believed that the goldfields were entitled to 17 out of the 50 Assembly seats, he was prepared to forego one seat for the sake of an extra province in another place. If consent to that province were not forthcoming, he would do his utmost to throw out the Bill when it came back to this House.

On motion by Mr. HIGHAM, progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE.

THE PREMIER moved:—

That the Committee have leave to sit again on Thursday next.

MR. MORAN: This was an important discussion, so far conducted on fair deliberative lines by both sides. It was impossible that the result of the debate should become known anywhere outside the metropolitan area by Thursday next; hence the resumption should be postponed till Tuesday. Redistribution affected not only the metropolis and the Eastern Goldfields, but the Murchison and the Northern Goldfields also; and time should be given for public opinion in outside centres to make itself heard. The Premier need not fear any organised opposition to the Bill after the existing opposition was defeated in fair fight. To-night the cross-benches had debated their case on a matter of detail, because they were unable to speak to the schedule generally. Why prevent a week's discussion? It was intended to hold a public meeting, probably on Monday next. Members could thus ascertain the feeling in Perth. Another should be held in Fremantle. The meetings would be open to Government supporters. Nothing would give him greater pleasure than to meet the Premier in debate; and if the hon. member were supported by the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Mines, so much the better. A reasonable request was made that the matter be adjourned until Tuesday, so that it could be discussed in the Press. He moved that the debate be adjourned until the next Tuesday.

MR. PURKISS: No party, whether on the Government, Opposition, or the cross-benches, would regret the public pulse being felt on this important question. It had been suggested that a meeting could be held in every metropolitan and

goldfields centre, and a full discussion take place on this question. Surely no one would refuse a request of that kind. The matter could be dealt with in the metropolitan districts, on the goldfields, and in the agricultural centres, and the opinions of the people obtained within a week. If it was desired to have a reflex of public opinion the reasonable request made by the member for West Perth should be granted. It would not be unreasonable to have an adjournment for a fortnight.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This question had been before the House for a considerable time; it had been discussed, not only in this Bill, but on the Constitution Bill, and at various other times; and the Government desired that the debate should be adjourned until Thursday next, as Wednesday was a private members' day.

MR. TAYLOR: This phase of the question had never been before the public until to-night. There was no possible chance of the outlying districts having the question properly placed before them if a reasonable adjournment was not allowed. By Tuesday all the populous centres on the goldfields, and places like Geraldton and Albany, could have the proposal placed before them, and the people could express their opinions upon the matter. Members had no desire to talk against time. The desire of members was that the matter should go before the country, and no unreasonable attitude would be taken up on Thursday next. The people whom he represented desired to have redistribution of seats on a population basis. Members only desired to lay their views before the country, so that the country could pronounce judgment upon the matter.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was fresh within his memory that, when the Bill was before the House some twelve months ago, he had suggested a somewhat similar course. Having then asked for an adjournment for a fortnight, he had learned with astonishment that no member in the House was willing to support him. Amongst those hon. members so anxious to enable public opinion to be heard was the member for Mt. Margaret, but if *Hansard* was searched his name would not be found among those supporting an adjournment twelve

months ago. It was strange that, when he (the Minister for Lands) asked for the adjournment twelve months before, those hon. members who now wanted time could not find time to enter one word to support him. When they now came out on party politics it was remarkable how these hon. gentlemen could trim their sails to meet every wind that blew. The proposal to adjourn until Thursday night, in view of the circumstances of twelve months previously, was a most liberal concession.

MR. DIAMOND: The Government should remember that amongst the people who had been termed cave-dwellers were a number of their most consistent supporters, and though the Government might be inclined to snub and condemn members on the other side of the House, they should at least exercise a little courtesy and discretion when considering the supporters who had stuck to them. He trusted the Government would consider the matter and consent to the proposal for a longer adjournment.

MR. NANSON: The member for Boulder had pointed out that last session he strove to obtain a postponement for a fortnight. Surely, now that the Bill had a reasonable chance of being passed, and now that the hon. gentleman was a member of the Ministry, he would help to get this adjournment. One was at a loss to see why the Government objected. If they were confident in their position they would welcome an expression of public opinion. To avoid that expression made one fancy that they did not believe they had that confidence. Members on the cross-benches were perfectly prepared to give their constituents an opportunity of making their opinions heard on the subject. The agitation with regard to the Bill was slowly working up, and it took a great deal to make the public realise the issues at stake. It was only this evening there had been a clear cut opinion as to whether the minority or the majority should rule in the Lower House. It was said that the scheme of redistribution as put forward to the cross-benches, was unfair to the goldfields. If that was so, the Government should welcome the opportunity of giving the goldfields a chance to protest against the scheme. If the adjournment was only to Thursday, the opportunity of consulting

constituents was not provided to hon. members who thought they had the country behind them. If the Government, believing in the voice of public opinion, found that they were in a minority on the matter, they would welcome some indication of what was the opinion outside the Chamber. It was urged in the interests of the people that the opportunity should be given to members, who so desired it, to call public meetings in their constituencies.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	18
Majority against				11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Atkins
Mr. Holman	Mr. Bath
Mr. Nanson	Mr. Burges
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Stone	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Moran (Teller).	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Hasle
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Jacoby
	Mr. James
	Mr. McDonald
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Reason
	Mr. Thomas
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion passed, and the debate adjourned 'till Thursday.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at seven minutes to 12 o'clock, until the next day.