

I suggest what is being proposed should be seriously considered by the Government; that is, all categories of witnesses who are called in respect of Governmental matters should be brought under one particular Act and not separated in various Statutes. This would be an achievement. One has to refer to a multitude of Acts to find out whether or not a witness has rights. It is very complex and in this legislative Chamber we should aim to simplify the situation which has come into being. This is not always easy to do.

I have not taken a particular interest in the matter but because of the discussion that has ensued it appears there is room for a reference to Crown Law. We cannot always rely on the Crown Law officers to give the best possible legal advice on some of these matters. Sometimes they are right and sometimes they are wrong.

Very often, when something is pointed out by leading attorneys or Queen's Counsel, the officers say, "Oh, you would be right; my interpretation was wrong." I am not sure exactly what we should do about this matter, but I do have sympathy with the endeavours of the member for Mt. Hawthorn. Perhaps he is attempting a little bit of socialisation, but it is justifiable to this small degree. If we accept his submission, we will not finish up with "reds under the beds"! His aim is to let the law run generally as it does at present, but to ensure that witnesses, when called to give evidence—whether by the Government or by the police—are paid a common witness fee. I suggest that the Minister should look at this matter again in the light of the argument that has ensued this afternoon.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Minister for Works).

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [6.02 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 30th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 30th September, 1975

The **PRESIDENT** (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (9): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Chicken Meat Industry Committee Bill.
2. Radiation Safety Bill.
3. Acts Amendment (Judicial Salaries and Pensions) Bill.
4. Marketing of Barley Act Amendment Bill.
5. Railways Discontinuance and Land Revestment Bill.
6. Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill.
7. Criminal Code Amendment Bill.
8. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act Amendment Bill.
9. Transport Commission Act Amendment Bill.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Tabling

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith): I have for tabling the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations for the year ended the 30th June, 1975.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 349).

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

DOOR TO DOOR (SALES) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Consumer Affairs Council: Views

The Hon. **LYLA ELLIOTT**, to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Will the Minister advise whether the Consumer Affairs Council is in full agreement with all the proposed amendments to the Door to Door (Sales) Act currently before the House?
- (2) If the answer is "No", on which amendments is there disagreement, and why?

The Hon. G. C. **MacKINNON** replied:

- (1) and (2) I thank the Hon. Lyla Elliott for giving me some prior notification of this question, which has given me a little time to think about it. The result of my thoughts in respect of the question is that I believe if it is not markedly out of order it is at least improper under the circumstances.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Why?

The Hon. G. C. **MacKINNON**: The Bill has been before this House for a considerable time and is currently in the recomittal stage. The purpose of questions without notice is to obtain information not otherwise available

to members on matters of some degree of urgency. As the Bill is in Committee any member can stand and ask any question he or she may care to ask during that stage. Therefore, my answer is "No"; I am not prepared to give the information under those circumstances.

QUESTIONS (2) ON NOTICE

1. FAMILY LAW COURT

Commencement

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Family Law Court will commence operations in all States except Western Australia on the 5th January, 1976?
- (2) If so, why is this State out of step with the rest of Australia on this important matter?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) The Family Law Act, 1975, will come into force in all States, including Western Australia, on the 5th January, 1976. From that date jurisdiction under the Act will be exercised by the Family Court of Australia in all States other than Western Australia; in this State, pending the establishment of a State Family Court, it will be exercised by the Supreme Court and the Summary Relief Court.
- (2) Western Australia has elected, pursuant to the provisions of section 41 of the Family Law Act 1975, to establish a State Family Court. This will require the enactment by the State Parliament of enabling legislation, followed by the execution of a formal agreement with the Commonwealth. The action being taken by Western Australia is clearly envisaged by the Commonwealth Act.

2. BUILDERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Complaints

The Hon. R. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) What action can the Builders Registration Board take against a registered builder on complaint from a person having a home constructed if—
 - (a) the house is not constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications passed by the local authority;
 - (b) the house is positioned incorrectly on the block or even if it is built back to front on the block;

(c) the foundations are of a lesser height than provided for in the specifications?

- (2) Is it the intention of the Government to amend the Builders Registration Act to give protection to a person having a home constructed by registered builders?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) The Board, providing it is satisfied that the complaint is justified, can direct the builder to carry out alterations to the building so that it conforms with plans and specifications.
- (2) It is considered that the Act at present gives protection to home builders, and the Bill now before Parliament is designed to strengthen this protection.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.54 p.m.]: When the Minister introduced this Bill he made the following comment on page 11 of his speech notes—

In commending the Bill to the House, I ask members opposite to have a good look at it and not be too hasty in condemning it.

I wonder why he said that.

The Hon. N. McNeill: We got a fair indication from the other place.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Government brought forward this Bill—and I will deal with the Minister's second reading speech more thoroughly as I proceed—stating that it would bring some justice to voters in the metropolitan area. However, when one studies the Bill and then studies the Act and sees what will be perpetrated by this House against the people of Western Australia one finds the Bill borders on seeking to introduce a dictatorship; because there are many things the Minister did not say when introducing the measure. As a matter of fact, he said very little.

This is a very important Bill. It consists of 10 clauses, one of which contains a schedule. All the amendments are major amendments and major departures from what has been the practice in Western Australia for many, many years; and yet we find a scanty 12 pages of notes presented to us by the Minister, and if those notes were condensed—because there are some half pages—we would find they comprise about 11 pages.

Firstly, I want it clearly understood that Labor Party policy is one-vote-one-value. We believe in democracy, and I will prove

as I proceed that the Liberal Party pretends to believe in democracy. However, the Liberal Party is not faithful to its own platform and to the statements made by its then Federal leader. Of course, it has brought forward this Bill in order to create a situation in which the present Government can stay in power, and possibly it brought forward the Bill as a result of a survey, the results of which leaped into *The National Times*. I do not know how the survey got into that newspaper, but it appeared in the issue of the 11th-16th August, 1975; and under the heading of "Hope for Labor" we find the following—

Most people, including many senior ministers and party officials, have written off the prospects of the Federal Labor Government.

Recent research, however, shows that all is not gloom for the party. A survey conducted for the Liberal Party in Western Australia came up with the surprising finding that if a State election was held there, Sir Charles Court's Government would be hard pressed to retain power.

At the same time, the survey confirmed the Federal Government's low standing in the west.

I do not think that survey particularly motivated the Liberal Party to bring down this Bill; I think it was the clear intention of the present Government to introduce a Bill for the specific purpose of gerrymandering the electorate. Of course, this measure is nothing but a gerrymander.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Nothing of the sort.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is a total gerrymander, and the Minister for Justice should be ashamed to be the Minister in charge of such a Bill in this House. He should be ashamed to present it to this place. Certainly no reason was given in the second reading speech in respect of the amendment to section 4 of the Act. After the Minister has studied that section in the Act no doubt he will tell us more about it, because up to date he has not said anything of consequence.

I think I had better begin by going through the Minister's speech notes. We find that the Electoral Commissioners will now divide the metropolitan area into 27 seats each with an equal number of voters; and we also find that the commissioners' right, privilege, or prerogative, in existence since 1947—and probably since before that—is being taken away from them. In other words, they have been dismissed. The boundaries have been fixed in the metropolitan area in accordance with the map which is exhibited on my right and which has been placed on the wall of the Chamber for the information of members.

The Hon. J. Heitman: They are fixed now.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I thought the honourable member would interject because he does not even know what is in the Act.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Of course I do.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: What is in the Act?

The Hon. J. Heitman: The boundaries are fixed now.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Who fixes the boundaries?

The Hon. J. Heitman: They were fixed in 1964.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The boundaries for the metropolitan area were fixed in 1961, not in 1964, and who fixed them?

The Hon. J. Heitman: The Boundaries Commission that sat on them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: But the Boundaries Commission has no say in fixing the boundaries in this instance. They have been gerrymandered from top to bottom by the Government. Let the Minister tell us who fixes these boundaries.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: He is not on his feet.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Through you, Mr President, I invite the Minister to give us the answer, because no-one has told us who fixed these boundaries.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Who fixes them?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I reckon Bernie Carpenter fixes them. He does all the other dirty work for the Liberal Party.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who is Bernie Carpenter?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Does the Minister not know? He is one of the vice-presidents of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: He is not a vice-president of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I think he is.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I suggest he is not, and I do not think he ever was.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Well, let us know who fixed the boundaries. Did the Minister fix the boundaries?

The Hon. N. McNeill: The Minister is responsible for the Bill.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I want to know who fixed the boundaries, and I think we are entitled to know. It is quite obvious that members sitting on the Government side of the House do not know who fixed the boundaries.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not know who fixes them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Why does not someone tell us why the boundaries were fixed? Have members on the Government side of the House no faith in the Chief Justice?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: My word we have!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Then why take this faith away?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: We are going to let them draw the boundaries of the electorates. They are going to draw the boundaries because we have faith in them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Who is to draw the boundaries?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The Boundaries Commission.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Boundaries Commission will draw the boundaries within a rigged metropolitan area; a boundary predetermined before the Bill was brought to Parliament. By this Bill the Government is seeking to repeal section 5 of the Act and set a predetermined boundary for the metropolitan area. The Minister has said, and the Bill provides, that the Government will cut this area into 27 metropolitan seats in which the voting will be of equal value.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: How can you deduce from that a total gerrymandering of the electorate?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the honourable member thinks I cannot deduce from that that it is a gerrymandering of the electorate he should read some of the articles that have been published by *The West Australian* about this.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You always say that what *The West Australian* prints is of no consequence and that no notice can be taken of it, so how is it that you are quoting *The West Australian* now?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When have I ever made that statement about *The West Australian*?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Frequently.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Not once have I made such a statement. I think the honourable member should keep quiet or he will get into trouble. Here we have a situation where the Government knows, does not know, or is not going to tell the people it represents who fixes the boundaries of the metropolitan area. What a horrible mess the Government has made of fixing the boundaries, because what do we find? We find that in the Gnaragana district the boundary diverts from one road to another to cut out six strawberry growers. Also we find that the Kalamunda electorate has been cut in half.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You are romancing now.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Let the Minister look at the boundaries on the map, because it is his map and not mine.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What are the names of the six strawberry growers?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not know. This is what the Government has done. The Government, in the Kalamunda electorate, has removed from the electorate all those areas where it had adverse ballot

boxes at the last election so that it may save the seat for Ian Thompson, and it has acted in a similar way in the Toodyay electorate. However, the horrible aspect of all this is the creation of a double standard, whereby people living on one side of a street are entitled to twice the voting power of people living on the other side. Of course, the Minister, in his second reading speech said, "We are going to make a variation of from 10 to 15 per cent in the country areas—that is the mining and agricultural areas—for the purpose of making allowances for community interest, transport, and other criteria that have to be taken into consideration." However, at Armadale we find that the railway line runs right through Armadale itself. On one side of the line the electors have one-vote-one-value, but on the other side of the line an elector has voting power equal to two votes.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Three.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Do you know anything about the development of that area?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. I am not worrying about development. I am worrying about a double standard that will be created and all members on the Government benches will stand accused of voting for it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You followed the theme of a total gerrymander for a while, but you then got off it for some reason or other after you referred to the six strawberry growers.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the honourable member wants to be a complete idiot he can, but he should let me finish my speech. He has no chance of distracting me whilst I am making my speech. He can try that with any inexperienced member, but it does not work with me.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Do you know what you are talking about?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member will have his turn to talk if he so desires. What I am saying is that most Government members represent areas where the voting ratio is 2 : 1; 3 : 1; 5 : 1, and even up to 15 : 1. This is the position in the electorates or provinces represented by Government members.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Fifteen to one!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. Is the honourable member surprised? Does he not know that the voting power of some people is 15 : 1? I am not surprised that he does not know, because that is typical of him. Returning to my comments on a gerrymander, if it is not a gerrymander why has a line been drawn through the middle of Armadale? It is a physical line.

The Hon. N. McNeill: That is a very good boundary for an electorate.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course it is a very good boundary but what the Minister said is that these areas are surrounded by Kalamunda and Rockingham.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Actually I have not said anything on the Bill yet.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister is in charge of the Bill and he must be responsible for the speech notes that I have in my hand. The Minister should not try to pull that one on me.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Certainly I am responsible. I am just correcting what you said.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: My words were, "The Minister said". It could be the Minister who introduced the Bill, and I did not name the Minister for Justice. In the Minister's second reading speech the following appears—

It must also be borne in mind, however, that the Bill, by creating four additional electoral districts within the new metropolitan area, is recognising the need to enlarge the number of metropolitan seats so as to enable proper representation to be given to electors within the metropolitan area.

Of course what the Government does not realise is that there was no need to go to the trouble of enlarging the number of metropolitan seats. It should have divided Western Australia into 51 electorates and it would have saved a great deal of money. Also, had it done that it would have given every person in the State equal representation.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: To suit the Labor Party.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: With the modes of transport and communication we have today, I do not think any person is disadvantaged, and even if he were his member of Parliament would not know about it,—

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: That is not a valid argument.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —because how many times does any member of Parliament visit all the people living along the trans-line; and there is no area more remote than that?

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Yes there is.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member does not even know what the Minister said. It is the distance from the capital city that counts. These people are living in a remote area. I sincerely suggest that if the Government wants to do something for these people it could, because I do not think anybody is politically disadvantaged in Western Australia. Can any honourable member tell me of a person who is politically disadvantaged?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You are telling us.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If Western Australia had been divided into 51 electorates to give every person an equal vote so that everyone would have equal access to a member of Parliament, that would have been the best course, because no-one can tell me that a person cannot get in touch with his member of Parliament irrespective of the party to which he belongs.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Obviously you do not know the disadvantages suffered by people in country areas, and more particularly in remote areas.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have been through all these electorates.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You may have been through them, but the people have to live in them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There are disadvantages for the member of Parliament, but the voters are not at such a great disadvantage. They can write a letter, and voters frequently write letters to their member of Parliament.

In returning to the situation that is created in the inner metropolitan area we find that Kalamunda is outside the metropolitan area—and no-one can tell me that Kalamunda is not part of the metropolitan area. In comparing that electorate with Cockburn, I would hazard a guess that Cockburn produces more primary produce than Kalamunda does, and yet Cockburn is classified as a metropolitan electorate.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are only guessing; you would not know that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said that I was hazarding a guess.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: And I said you were only guessing.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If one looks to the value of the truckloads of produce that flow from Cockburn to the metropolitan markets—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: But the boundaries are not decided on the amount of produce an electorate produces.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When we get to the outer areas the boundaries are decided by the area of land; the number of sheep—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: No they are not.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —and how many bales of hay are cut.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That has nothing to do with the boundaries.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: What happens in a bad season?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That has nothing to do with the boundaries, and you know it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is quite a useful interjection. If the boundary of Armadale is settled on the railway line

and Medina, Calista, Orella, and Baldavis are metropolitan seats, is the honourable member aware that it would be cheaper to come from Armadale and Kalamunda by MTT bus to the capital than it would be to come from the Kwinana area? That is outside the 25-mile radius and a concession does not apply; but it applies in Armadale and Kalamunda.

It is ridiculous, and it is certainly not honest, to say that because the metropolitan area has grown in certain directions we should cut the areas in half.

The local authority boundaries—which have been boundaries by which the electoral commissioners have usually worked—have been thrown overboard by this Bill. The Electoral Commissioners accepted community interest. We find that people on one side of the road in Armadale have a double voting value as compared with those on the other side of the road; even though the latter still pay the same rates and taxes, meet the same food bills, and use the same mode of transport, in the main, to their places of occupation. Yet we find the Government has split community interests for political purposes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It has already been done in Kalamunda.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When the Minister replies to the second reading debate I will want to know—and I will press for this information—why the prerogative of setting the boundaries for the metropolitan area has been removed from the Electoral Commissioners.

There is about a two-to-one ratio in this House of country and metropolitan members and I would like them to stand up on about a two-to-one basis together with the members of the Labor Party when speaking to this Bill. Are the Government members really interested in the Bill, or will they be like pigeons and vote for it in the same manner as did Government members in another place, where we had the spectacle of only one member of the Government party speaking to the Bill; and, incidentally, he made a dreadful hash of it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: He did such a good job that there was no necessity for any one else to speak.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Government members in another place voted for the Bill like the sheep they are, and I hope this will not happen in this House. I hope the legislation will be reviewed and that we will be given the reasons for its introduction. We have not as yet been given these reasons and I think we are entitled to have them. As I have said the Government cannot say it has a mandate to introduce legislation of this type. I hope Mr Clive Griffiths is listening to what I am saying.

The Hon. N. McNeill: What do you mean we have not got a mandate? Of course we have.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister's Government has no mandate to introduce this type of legislation. Not one word has been written, spoken, or printed indicating that the boundaries will be juggled in this manner; and that is what is being done.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What about your Government's part and attempt to amend the Electoral Districts Act while you people were there?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As I have said it was laid down in our policy and we were going to carry out the necessary amendment, but we did not seek to attempt to juggle any boundaries. We did attempt to bring in a unicameral system of government in which there would be 81 seats with 81 electorates with everybody having equal representation by a member of Parliament.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You had no mandate to do that.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Yes we did.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Did you introduce it in the last term of your Government?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It was introduced in the other House.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It did not get very far.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: What the honourable member fails to understand is that under section 4 of the Act—and I hope it will continue to be the Act—the electoral commissioners determine the boundaries in the metropolitan area. This of course is to be repealed. On page 4 of his notes the Minister states—

The Bill thus proceeds to direct the electoral commissioners to divide the metropolitan area into 27 electoral districts being an increase of four on the other number.

But what the Minister did not mention was the rigged boundary he has put around the metropolitan area. Why has not somebody told us about this? I want to know who drew the map; who was responsible for it? I also want to know who is responsible for the framing of the legislation as such; because when questions were asked in another place during the debate nobody was prepared to take the blame for the drawing up of this legislation.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I have already said that as the Minister I accept the responsibility.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is quite a different thing from being responsible.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not know about that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: To accept responsibility is one thing—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That makes him responsible.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is, however, quite different from being the responsible person.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I am the responsible person.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: So the Minister is trying to hedge around that aspect also.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The last thing you want is to admit that you know the answer.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The only person I could think of in the Liberal Party who would stoop so low as to do this is the person I have already named.

The Hon. N. McNeill: A person who, quite frankly, I have not heard of.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister could not have read some of the statutory declarations that were tabled in another place.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You said he was the Vice-President of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said of a branch of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is not what you said previously.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: People are only allowed to live within the framework of a democracy and this framework and this democracy are being taken away from them by this Bill because they will not have an independent body which will determine where the majority of the 435 000 voters will live—whether they will live in the metropolitan area, or in the country zone, even though it may be only across the road. So here we find people being denied the right to live within a democracy—democracy is being taken away by the fixing of this boundary.

I would have very little argument with this Bill apart from the one-vote-one-value aspect if it were not for the despicable action that has been taken in fixing the boundary. The action taken is utterly despicable because it harks back to other rigged boundaries that have been introduced—and with which I do not agree—throughout Australia and other parts of the world from time to time.

I do not think any boundary should be fixed. For example I do not think the north-west or even the Lower North Province seat, or the Murchison-Eyre seat should be fixed. My colleagues might disagree with me on this but I do not think it should be done. I think these seats, like all other seats, should be subject to redistribution, and there is a very good reason why that should be so.

Let us consider the electorate of Murchison-Eyre which has 2 260 electors and the seat of Pilbara which has 11 885 electors. This represents a ratio, near

enough, of five-to-one. There is an imaginary line that separates the electorate.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Have any of the members complained about that?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am pleased about that interjection.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It would be the only time you have been pleased at anything I have said.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am pleased because it is the only sensible interjection the honourable member has made.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are being very complimentary.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: No, he is only downgrading himself.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Government were consistent and the Minister's second reading notes were consistent there would be an indication that the Pilbara would be split. There will not be any two-to-one voting ratio in the Pilbara because that electorate will continue to have 11 885 electors, plus. The Pilbara will continue to grow, but there will not be any change to the boundary. I am pleased Mr Withers is nodding his head in agreement with me.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I am only agreeing that the Pilbara will grow.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Is it honest for anybody to say that because of remoteness there should be a loading of double the voting value plus 10 to 15 per cent, more or less? Is that just? I would say it would take much longer to get to some of the wheatbelt areas than it would take for Mr Withers to fly to his home in Kununurra, or to the voting strength of his electorate.

So where are the lines of communication? There may have been reasons for this in the early days, before the advent of telephones, radios, aeroplanes, good roads, and fast travel. Before the advent of these facilities it may have been necessary to take certain special circumstances into consideration, but now we will be hard pressed to give a reason, because schooling is easily accessible to most children in Western Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: To most of them, because most of them are in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said schooling is easily accessible to most children in Western Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I am agreeing with you, because most of them are in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is only in some very remote areas where usually through economic circumstances, or for some other reason, that children are not sent to school.

If the Government were all that concerned about people living in the outback and in the remote areas of the State it would not be worrying about juggling the electoral boundaries in its efforts to stay in Government; it would endeavour to stay in Government by giving the people in the areas concerned the other things they need.

When Mr Withers was a member of the Opposition he was going to change everything that was happening in the north-west—he was going to change the world. He asked hundreds of questions and in three years of Labor Government everything went wrong! The whole situation deteriorated.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I agree.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Everything has gone wrong since then! However, the honourable member does not ask any questions now, and nothing has been done in his province.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is not nice; that is not right.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Who said that nothing has been done?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Nothing has been done in the honourable member's province, so it can be seen that if the Government were dinkum in its attempt to help people in remote areas the Minister for Health would be providing better medical services, and more doctors.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is a strange statement; I have already done so. In addition, a hospital was opened at Dampier the other week.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: The one we started.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Mr Withers complained about people not having a bus service.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: They are not worried at the moment.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: He asked many questions when we were in Government.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot see what this has to do with the Bill before the House.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: My remarks are connected with the Bill, Mr President, because if the Government were interested in the welfare of the people of Western Australia—rather than in rigging electoral boundaries in the metropolitan area and loading the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area with a two-to-one ratio, and up to a 15 to one ratio in some cases—it would be providing services for people in those remote areas. The Government would then not have to load votes, because it would receive votes in any case.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I think the honourable member would have a terribly hard job convincing people in the agricultural area that the Labor Party has any sympathy for them.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister will have a different opinion when we go to the people on the next occasion. The Labor Party did not lose the Government; the honourable member is aware of that.

On the theme of political honesty, and getting away from gerrymandering, let us see what appeared in *The West Australian* of the 16th May, 1974. The article refers to the case for a "No" vote at the referendum which was about to take place, and it was written by the then Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Snedden.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He was.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said, by the then Federal Leader of the Opposition. The article states that the answer to the questions involved in the referendum should be "No", four times. A section of the article reads—

Every person's vote should be of equal value. It is the number of votes that counts. Distribution of an electorate according to population denies the fundamental principle of enabling any voter to have equal say compared with his fellow voter.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is the reason Mr Snedden got the sack as Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If those remarks do not mean one-vote-one-value, I do not know what does.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I thought the honourable member would have been in favour of the repeal of section 5 of the Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Why should the Minister have such a hair-brained idea?

The Hon. N. McNeill: I allowed myself that little luxury.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am amazed.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I have not heard the Leader of the Opposition say anything in favour of it, yet.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: The Leader of the Opposition is very complimentary, is he not?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not know why the Minister should have such a hair-brained idea. I asked a straight-out question.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: He has more chance of having a hair-brained idea, than has the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Does the Leader of the Opposition know the contents of section 5 of the principal Act?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In October, last year—just 11 months ago—the Liberal Party put out its platform. Part of that platform reads—

In Western Australia the electoral system should be maintained which guarantees substantial equality of voting powers with regular redistributions based on numbers of electors. What does "substantial equality" mean? Members of the Liberal Party should be able to tell me that. Does it mean a 15 to one loading? Is that "substantial equality"?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It means what is contained in the Bill.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Is it a two to one voting power? Is that "substantial equality"?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Has the Leader of the Opposition read the Bill?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is what it means.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Two to one, plus 15 per cent?

The Hon. N. McNeill: Where is it stated, two to one?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course, the present Act has that provision. If the Minister is aware of what is in the Bill, he will know that what I am saying is right. There will be a two to one loading plus a variation. Section 5 of the principal Act is to be repealed, and section 6 is to be repealed and re-enacted.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: We are not repealing section 6 of the principal Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have read the Bill. The intention of the Bill is to repeal section 5 of the principal Act and include virtually the same wording stating that the electoral commissioners shall divide the metropolitan area into 27 seats, and the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area into 24 seats. The agricultural, mining, and pastoral area will have, as near as possible, a two to one loading when compared with the metropolitan area. That is what the provision means.

I know that the Minister who is handling the Bill does not understand it, but that is what the Bill means. It will provide for a 10 to 15 per cent loading—previously it was a 10 per cent loading. I have no argument against a 10 per cent loading because families cannot be cut in half. However, the loading will now be 10 to 15 per cent, "more or less". When the Minister replies I would like him to explain the meaning of "more or less". It has to be either 10 per cent or 15 per cent; it cannot be more or less. The figure has to be within a specific area.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The 15 per cent comes down to one-third.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We do not intend to split people; we are not that stupid.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: More or less!

The Hon. N. McNeill: The meaning of the Leader of the Opposition is not clear. You talk about 10 to 15 per cent.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The provisions of the Bill will increase the percentage. The Minister will be indebted to me for telling him what is in the Bill. The percentage will be 10 to 15 per cent, more or less. Proposed new section 6 reads—

6. The Commissioners shall—

(a) divide the Metropolitan Area into twenty-seven electoral districts;

(b) divide the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area into twenty-four electoral districts,

and shall, for the purpose of dividing each such area into electoral districts, fix a quota of electors for the electoral districts for each such area as follows, namely, the total number of enrolled electors within each area shall be divided by the number of electoral districts into which the area is to be divided and the quotient shall be the quota of electors for each electoral district within the area.

Clause 6 of the Bill reads—

6. The first proviso to subsection (1) of section 7 of the principal Act is amended by adding after the words "more or less" the passage "in the case of the division of the Metropolitan Area into electoral districts or to a greater extent than fifteen per centum more or less in the case of the division of the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area into electoral districts".

Does that mean 15 per cent will be the maximum, or can the figure go to 20 per cent? What does it mean; I am asking a question and not simply criticising.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It means, 15 per cent.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: More or less.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: More or less. Can it be less?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It is 15 per cent more, or 15 per cent less; the Leader of the Opposition is aware of that.

The Hon. N. McNeill: We are not trying to fool anybody.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Even the Leader of the Opposition is aware of that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am very pleased the member opposite is aware of what it means. I have already read to the House an item attributed to the ex-Federal Leader of the Opposition, and ex-leader of the Liberal Party. I have also read an extract from the platform of the Liberal Party. My interpretation of those

two articles is that "substantial equality" means "substantial voting rights". That is, one-vote-one-value.

I now refer to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Members opposite in this Chamber subscribe to that declaration, even if they do not subscribe to the policy of their ex-Federal leader. I am aware that he was sacked so members opposite probably do not subscribe to the platform of the Liberal Party because they are acting in contradiction to it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: No, we are not.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If members opposite subscribe to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights I will remind them of article 21 (3), which states—

The will of the people shall be the basis of authority of Government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Equal suffrage means equal voting.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That means that everyone gets one vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It means that equal voting is essential to a democracy. So it seems that members opposite have even thrown overboard the Charter of the United Nations because they are not prepared to accept it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Does Australia have the same voting power as does the USA when it comes to voting in the United Nations? Both countries have one vote. Surely, if the argument of the Leader of the Opposition is correct, the USA ought to get a hell of a lot more votes.

The PRESIDENT: Order. A lot more votes.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: A lot more votes.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Does the trade union movement also provide for selection under those conditions?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: One-vote-one-value.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I believe it does provide for selection under those conditions.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I am talking about the Declaration of Human Rights.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Declaration of Human Rights refers to "equal suffrage".

The PRESIDENT: Order. Whatever happens, I would like the honourable member to stick to the Bill.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am talking about one-vote-one-value, Mr President, and in so doing I have referred to the Liberal Party platform, the Declaration of

Human Rights of the United Nations, and also to a statement by Mr Snedden. I do not think I have got away from the Bill.

Let us have a look at the report of the Joint Committee on Constitutional Review, of 1959. As members will be aware, the Labor Party was not in power at that time. Perhaps I had better mention the names of those who were on the Constitutional Review Joint Committee because it will have some bearing on what I have to say.

This committee was set up by the then Prime Minister of Australia (the Hon. R. G. Menzies) and it was composed of six Government members and six Opposition members—equal representation. I cannot see the names of the members at the moment, but I may be able to inform the House of these at a later stage. Six members of the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government and six Opposition members brought down a unanimous report. On page 47, under the heading of, "The desirability of a constitutional safeguard", item 329 reads—

Thus, the Committee concluded that it should recommend the inclusion in the Constitution of provisions ensuring the regular review of the electoral divisions of each State and also accord near uniformity to the value accorded to the votes of the electors for each of the States.

That is a pretty clear definition of the meaning of the committee. Item 330 states—

One form of gerrymandering is the creation of electoral divisions in which there are substantial disparities in the number of enrolled voters so securing for a political party greater representation than it should have. In all its forms, the device is thoroughly subversive of the democratic process. In making possible minority governments, the majority can be deprived of the government of its choice and the way is opened for arbitrary action impairing the freedom of the individual even though that action stands condemned by the majority of people who comprise the electors of the Commonwealth.

I repeat that this was a unanimous report.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is why the allowances of 10 per cent and 15 per cent are included in the Bill—to stop such a situation.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Obviously the honourable member does not understand what this report means.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I understand it all right; I know what you are talking about.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This is the one-vote-one-value system, but perhaps the honourable member does not subscribe to that.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I subscribe to the system where this State is divided into regions, and those regions are divided into electorates of equal representation.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is not true.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is so, with a margin of 10 per cent in the metropolitan area and 15 per cent in country areas.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the honourable member wishes to mislead the House with his interjections—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I am not misleading anyone.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course the honourable member is misleading the House. He said that the State is divided into regions and then the regions are divided into equal areas.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: With a 10 or 15 per cent leeway.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: All right. Where is the Kimberley—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Way up north!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —in comparison with the Pilbara? It is next door. An imaginary line has been drawn and the Kimberley electorate has 4 405 voters—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: There is a special provision for those seats in the north and you know it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —and the Pilbara has 11 885 voters.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: There is a special provision for this.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not make that statement, it was the honourable member who made it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: There is special provision for these seats, and you know it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are too many interjections. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition should address his remarks to the Chair, and he should not encourage interjections.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am not encouraging interjections at all, and I take exception to that statement.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am of the opinion that the Leader of the Opposition is taking some slight action towards encouraging interjections.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Mr President, the interjection was made by a member. I was not even speaking on that particular subject.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Yes you were.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member said that the State is divided into regions and then the regions are divided with a 10 or 15 per cent differential.

The PRESIDENT: Order! When the Leader of the Opposition is checking

through his speech, I think he will discover that he asked a number of questions across the Chamber to members who were not participating in the debate.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I admit, Sir, that I asked questions, but this was very early in my speech.

The PRESIDENT: I believe that is encouraging interjections.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said, through you, Mr President, that I would like an answer to my questions because no-one has told us—

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition knows that the time to receive answers is when the Minister replies, and not by way of interjection.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That may be a very good point, Sir, and I thank you for it. I will now ask the Minister some questions which I hope he will answer when he replies. Firstly, who set the boundaries for the metropolitan area, and why were the Electoral Commissioners disparaged? Was this because of a lack of trust in them, or for what other reason?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You answer my question: who set the boundaries in the original 1947 Bill?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I thought I was asking the questions so that the Minister could reply during his speech.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There was no disparagement of the commissioners.

The Hon. N. McNeill: That is so.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I want to know why the decision was taken away from the Electoral Commissioners. The reason for it was either a lack of trust in them or to gerrymander the electorate.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You are wrong on both counts.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You still have not answered my question.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not hear your question.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who set the original boundaries in the 1947 Bill?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: My second question is: how many people will be transferred from the country to the metropolitan area under this proposal? I am referring particularly to the residents in Armadale, Kalamunda, and Sorrento. This question has not yet been answered, although it was posed many times in another place.

Why did not the Government follow the boundaries of local government areas in order to retain community interests? A feature of the Minister's second reading speech was that the 10 or 15 per cent differential was necessary for this purpose, and yet we find that local authority areas have been split.

I will ask my first question again, so that the Minister will know exactly what I mean: why has the Government departed from the convention of allowing the Electoral Commissioners to determine the electoral boundaries?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Have they ever done that? In the 1947 legislation it was laid down; you raised no objection to that, and with all your amendments, you never tried to change it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Minister reads the Act—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You did not object to it in 1947, or your party did not object to it then.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I was not here in 1947.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I know you were not, but your party did not object to it. Successive commissioners have suggested that the metropolitan area should be enlarged.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I think I should read part of the 1947 Act so that members will be aware of its contents before it is completely butchered. Section 4 (b) states what the Electoral Commissioners must have regard for, and subparagraph (i) reads—

the Metropolitan Area as the area described as such in the final recommendations of the Commissioners published in the *Government Gazette* dated the fourteenth day of December, nineteen hundred and sixty-one.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is laid down in the Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Electoral Commissioners determine the metropolitan area, as published in the *Government Gazette*.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is right.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The Electoral Commissioners have recommended for years that the metropolitan area should be expanded.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It was always their right to do this.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is right.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: But the measure before us is to change this—it will no longer be their right.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We have followed the precedent set in 1947.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The commissioners will be directed to form a metropolitan area within a fixed boundary, and this was not the case previously.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was laid down in the 1947 Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have just read from the 1947 Act.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is right, it is laid down.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I read from Act No. 51 of 1947, as amended. The parent Act was amended in 1955, 1963, and 1965. So members can see that the Electoral Commissioners did have this right, prerogative, and privilege to set the metropolitan boundaries as they saw fit, and not as they were directed by a Government.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I think you do not understand that Act at all.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We will have to see that subsequent speakers explain it to you.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will be very pleased when the honourable member gets to his feet to tell us what he knows about the Electoral Districts Act.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who do you mean?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am referring to the Hon. Clive Griffiths. I do not believe that the honourable member feels it is fair and reasonable that someone living just across the road from his electors should be entitled to two votes.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Entitled to what?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Two votes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Everyone has one vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, but some of those votes have double value. It may be better if we said to the people in areas where the voting value is 15 times greater than others, "Here are 15 ballot papers; you just fill them all out." We would hear an outcry then, and yet it is the same principle as that proposed in the measure.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When you first entered Parliament, individuals could have more than one vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Individuals could not have more than one vote when I entered Parliament.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Were you elected later than that? I thought you were elected during the voluntary election time.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, I was elected at that time.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The electors could have more than one vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Not for me.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No, that is so.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is great credit to you, Mr President, that that principle was changed.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: In an election for the Upper House electors could vote for a candidate in every province.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: At that time there were 10 provinces and electors could have had 10 votes, but their wives could not

vote at all. For this very reason we supported the amending legislation in 1965. We knew that we would lose out under its provisions, and there were some things in the Bill we did not like.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Like fun you did, you were all so certain that you would sweep the pool it was pitiful.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Do you think we had no idea of what would happen?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No idea at all.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We had a very good idea.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We knew about it, because we knew that the electors were well-balanced people.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: When have you ever done anything to advantage the Labor Party?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said that we are opposed to the measure before us because of the principles involved in it. We believe in equality of voting strength for all the people of Western Australia.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They have equality; they all have one vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister for Justice and the other Liberal Party members who are interjecting frequently keep telling us that people in certain areas are entitled to extra voting power.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: In the State Government, but not in a Federal election.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We are in State Parliament now.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I wish the Minister would remember that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister for Justice has a very distinct responsibility, and even his very title emphasises this. He has brought in some fairly harsh laws, but the laws are applicable equally to every person in the State. Surely the Minister for Education will not tell me—

The Hon. N. McNeill: The laws affect some people far more than others.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is something wrong with your system.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Traffic laws affect a person who drives a car much more than other people.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How do you arrive at that conclusion? That is debatable.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister for Justice would not introduce a Bill which provided that people in certain areas would be liable to penalties 14 times greater than people living in other areas.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It frequently happens.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This is what is happening here; the Government has not introduced uniform legislation for equality of voting rights throughout Western Australia, and the Minister is not being honest with himself as far as his Ministerial portfolio is concerned. It is not justice to disadvantage one person by comparison with the other, but the Government will do this by the passing of this Bill.

The Hon. N. McNeill: There will be a far greater equality than there has ever been before—certainly under the previous legislation—and you know it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We are living in 1975, not 1947, when people in remote areas suffered from a lack of communication facilities and a host of other problems. However, today a network of efficient communications exists. Almost every person in Western Australia living in a remote area can obtain the services of a flying ambulance, but in 1947 he could not, simply because of the lack of communication facilities. Gradually, these problems have been overcome and today, the problem of remoteness does not exist to the same degree as it did previously.

We are making laws for the people of 1975, not the people of 1947. But the Government still is prepared to set the clock back to 1947, because the principles inherent in this legislation are the same as those embodied in the legislation of 1947. In 1947, we did not have a metropolitan area established by a Government whose aim it was to gerrymander the electorate; the Electoral Commissioners had the right and power to set the boundaries then.

I believe it is hypocritical for a Premier to go to the people and say he is going to put things right—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He has put the boundaries right!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Premier has put the boundaries right to create his own little dictatorship in Western Australia. When the second reading debate is concluded, I intend to move amendments which will be substantially the same as those moved in the Assembly for the purpose of bringing about equality and a fair go for everyone in Western Australia; namely, one-vote-one-value.

I oppose this legislation. We have witnessed some of the most shockingly repressive legislation ever introduced by a Government in any Parliament of Australia. One example is the fuel and energy legislation. But now we are confronted with this Bill, which will herd people into areas, where they will not be treated equally as citizens of Western Australia. I believe such legislation is a disgrace to the Government, and I do not support it.

Sitting suspended from 6.04 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. Lyla ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [7.30 p.m.]: The Bill before us is, in my opinion, extremely offensive on three counts. Firstly, it seeks to increase the total number of members of this Parliament by six. This is totally unnecessary, and will impose a further burden on the taxpayers of this State by the Court Government to the extent of at least \$180 000 a year. Secondly, it seeks to gerrymander near-metropolitan electorates, so as to make them safer for the Liberal Party. Thirdly, and perhaps this is the worst offence committed by the Government in the legislation before us, it continues to deny the people of this State the democratic right of one-vote-one-value.

The Government cannot justify increasing the number of members in the State Parliament. Already we have the highest proportion of parliamentarians in relation to population of any of the mainland States. If we look at the figures for the lower Houses of Parliament we find that in New South Wales an Assembly member represents on the average 28 606 electors, and the figures for the other States decrease, with Queensland having one Assembly member for every 14 468 electors.

Based on the existing 51 members in the Legislative Assembly of this State, if we look at the enrolments as at March this year we find there is on the average one Assembly member representing every 12 050 electors. If we add to that four more Assembly members—and the Bill before us seeks to do that—the ratio will be reduced to one member for every 11 174 electors.

If we turn to the Federal Parliament we find that for the House of Representatives there is one member for every 62 185 electors. If we examine the workload of parliamentarians I do not think anyone can deny that the Federal parliamentarians are placed at a distinct disadvantage, because of all the travelling backwards and forwards to Canberra, which cuts down the time they can spend in their offices attending to the problems of their constituents.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Canberra is no further away from Perth than is Kununurra.

The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT: On the average one House of Representatives member represents 62 185 electors. I submit it is not possible to justify increasing the number of parliamentarians in this State, thus imposing a further burden on the taxpayers to the extent of almost \$200 000 a year. This money could be better spent on supplying the needs of the people. It could be the means of providing 10 new houses a year, additional classrooms, or concessions to pensioners in meeting their electricity bills.

The Government finds that it cannot justify the existing metropolitan boundary which is bursting at the seams. Even the editorial in *The West Australian* of the 14th May called on the Government to recognise the inequities created under the Electoral Districts Act and what it called the glaring flaws in the metropolitan boundary drawn up 12 years ago.

What does the Government do? Instead of abandoning the archaic provisions in the Electoral Districts Act which have produced such gross inequalities in vote values and introducing real electoral reform, the Government sets out to make the situation worse by introducing a gerrymander.

If we look at the areas to be taken out of the rural region and added to the metropolitan area, we find that this move will strengthen the position of sitting Liberal members representing Toodyay, Kalamunda, and Dale.

Firstly let us look at the position in the Dale electorate. The area west of the railway line referred to by the Leader of the Opposition will be excised from the Dale electorate. Let us take into account some of the boxes of votes for the last State election in this area. In the Armadale West box the Labor candidate for the Council received 49.35 per cent of the votes; in the Kelmscott High School box the Labor candidate received 47.86 per cent of the votes, and in the Westfield Park Primary School box the Labor candidate received 56.84 per cent of the votes. These are the areas which the Bill proposes to take out of the Dale electorate.

As against that let us look at some of the areas that the Bill proposes to retain in the Dale electorate. The first is Karra-gullen where the Labor candidate received 28.31 per cent of the votes at the last election. I wonder why it is proposed to retain that area! Roleystone is another area that it is proposed to retain, and received 39.23 per cent of the votes. The area represented in the Armadale Primary School box on the other side of the railway line is to be left out of the metropolitan area, and that was where the Labor candidate received 43.02 per cent of the vote.

In the Kalamunda electorate, two areas with the two highest Labor boxes of votes will be excised.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Did the Labor candidate win in those two boxes?

The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT: They were the two highest boxes of Labor votes. At the last State election the two highest boxes of Labor votes in the Kalamunda electorate were Forrestfield with 48.93 per cent, which is a pretty good Labor vote, and Maida Vale with 47.61 per cent. Those two areas will be taken out of the Kalamunda electorate, but the electorate will retain Gooseberry Hill where at the last

State election the Labor candidate for the Council received 28.98 per cent of the votes, Lesmurdie where the Labor candidate received 32.06 per cent of the votes, and Kalamunda where the Labor candidate received 35.57 per cent of the votes.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You can hardly draw a line bringing in Forrestfield and Maida Vale into the country sector, and placing the others in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I do not think there should be a line at all.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The principle that should be adopted throughout Western Australia is one-vote-one-value.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The other electorate which I believe is involved in a gerrymander is Toodyay. Let us look at some of the boxes of votes for the last State election. In the Wexcombe box the Labor candidate received 79.47 per cent of the votes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: What was the total number of votes cast—112?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I have the complete figures. I do not think what the honourable member has said is relevant. The point at issue is the percentage of Labor votes in each of those boxes. In the Girrawheen Primary School box the Labor candidate received 60.11 per cent of the votes. I suppose one can say that is a predominantly Labor district. In the Girrawheen East Primary School box the Labor candidate received 63.07 per cent of the votes; in the Middle Swan Kindergarten box he received 59.07 per cent of the votes; and in the Craigie Primary School box he received 59.63 per cent of the votes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You have not mentioned the Greenwood box or the Carine Glades box.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Under the Bill the Government has left within the rural sector the suburb of Wanneroo where the Labor candidate received 41.83 per cent of the votes at the last election. No-one would suggest that Wanneroo, Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda, and Lesmurdie are not part of the metropolitan area.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: But they are outside a certain boundary area.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I have already said there should be no boundary at all. It is absurd to suggest that people living in those areas should have a weighted vote. No-one can say that the areas I have mentioned—Wanneroo, Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda and Lesmurdie—are not part of the metropolitan area.

People on Rottnest Island which is separated from the mainland by 12 miles of ocean are considered to be metropolitan dwellers; yet people who live in Wanneroo and who can drive in their vehicles into

Perth within 30 minutes are still classified as rural dwellers. This is not only absurd; it is patently a disgraceful gerrymander.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I would not like to drive from Wanneroo to Perth in 30 minutes, and keep within the speed limit.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: There can be no doubt that the Liberal Party, far from introducing electoral reform, has deliberately set out to strengthen its hold on the reins of office.

The National Times of the 11th-16th August, 1975, reported that a survey conducted for the Liberal Party in Western Australia came up with the finding that if an election had been held at that time the Government of Sir Charles Court would have had great difficulty in hanging onto office.

I believe it is quite obvious that Sir Charles Court's Government is taking all steps possible to ensure it does retain power, while at the same time endeavouring to hoodwink the people into thinking it is doing the metropolitan area a great favour by giving it four more seats.

This type of action is reminiscent of the sort of tricks which Sir John Forrest used to employ in his day. The only reason women got the vote when they did in this State was as a result of ulterior motives on the part of Sir John Forrest. If members opposite do not know the story I would be happy to relate it to them.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What were the ulterior motives?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The discovery of gold towards the end of the last century brought with it an influx of miners to the goldfields, and there developed a conflict of interest between the radical miners and the more conservative landowners of the south-west of the State. The miners claimed they were underrepresented in the Parliament, because areas with fewer electors had more members in Parliament and therefore they had a greater say in the affairs of the State.

At that time members will know that if a person had property in more than one electorate he was allowed more than one vote. The trend is still evident today; although the conservatives do not have the same franchise they had formerly, they still control this Parliament by their control of certain areas.

At that time the demand for votes for women was growing, and Sir John Forrest thought he would be smart by satisfying the demands being made on him by the women. He realised it would be politically advantageous to him, because the great majority of the women at that time were the wives of landowners and property owners in the more conservative areas of the State, whereas the miners who arrived at the goldfields pushing wheelbarrows

containing their belongings were accompanied by very few women to that part of the State.

So women were granted the vote in 1899, Sir John Forrest thinking that such a move would be politically advantageous to him. However, the tactic failed because at the next election his Government was defeated because the women failed to exercise their right to vote, which was not compulsory.

From the very beginning of the parliamentary system there have been people who have tried to justify the exclusion of certain groups or classes from participating in the selection of Government. Firstly it was argued that only people with property should be entitled to vote. Then it was suggested that only men would have enough wisdom to exercise this right. Then the vote was begrudgingly given to women, and, finally, it was realised that Aborigines were people, too.

In this State, although we have adult franchise for both Houses of Parliament, we are still a long way from a democratic electoral system, and the very people who today would continue to deny the people of this State one-vote-one-value are the sort of people who, in the past, would have supported property franchise or would have opposed voting for women. I refer to the conservatives in our society who are opposed to progress and are afraid of real democracy.

In its propaganda the Liberal Party makes a great deal of the rights of the individual and yet it provides evidence in this Bill, and by its continued support of malapportionment of electoral boundaries, that it just does not place a skerrick of value on the rights of the individual to equal voting power. I think we should be ashamed of the electoral set-up in this State. Every article or lecture by an independent political commentator which I have read has listed Western Australia as one of the worst States for malapportionment of electoral boundaries; yet in 1975 we have here a Bill which is doing nothing to rectify the situation.

Let us look at the enrolment figures as at the 1st February, 1975. If we add up all the electors for the metropolitan area we find that they represent 63 per cent of the total electors of the State. Surely fairness and equity would demand that 63 per cent of the electors should be represented by 63 per cent of the seats in Parliament. But what do we find? These people are represented by only 45 per cent of the seats in the Assembly and 33.3 per cent of the seats in this Chamber. On the other hand, 37 per cent of the country electors, on the existing 51 seats in the Assembly, have 55 per cent of those seats and 66.6 per cent of the seats in this Chamber.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: They are strangely quiet on the other side.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Instead of redressing this imbalance, the Government is worsening the inequality of the votes between the city and the country. Let me explain what I mean. It has been estimated that in the areas which are to be added to the metropolitan area inside that boundary the number of metropolitan electors will increase by about 7 per cent, but if we have a look at the number of increased seats in the Assembly we find it will be increased by only 4 per cent. This is what I mean when I refer to the worsening of the malapportionment which exists.

Dr. F. K. Crowley, who was formerly senior lecturer in history at the University of Western Australia, in the book, "The Government of the Australian States", referred to over-representation of rural areas in the Parliament of Western Australia. He said—

The special protection given them in the 1890's has been little affected either by electoral re-arrangement or by the increasing urbanisation of the population.

He refers to our electoral set-up as—

... a nineteenth century electoral system which was designed to protect property and particularly country property, which considerably favours country districts in the Legislative Assembly and is carried to 'remarkable' lengths in the Legislative Council.

I do not want to make lengthy quotations, but I do wish to refer to Henry B. Mayo and his work, "Introduction to Democratic Theory", because I want to demonstrate that it is not only the Labor Party which is expressing disgust at the weighting of votes and the malapportionment of boundaries, but also other independent political commentators. Henry B. Mayo said—

One type of unequal voting, resulting from districts of unequal populations, is common in nearly every country and sometimes defended by a primitive type of theory. I refer to the rural-urban division and the fact that so many countries grossly overweight the rural vote at the expense of the urban by creating less populous rural districts. The theory behind it, such as it is, is a form of "interest" representation: that somehow the rural population (alternatively, the farmers or the stout yeomen) are the backbone of the country, superior in some relevant way to urban dwellers; or that farming is a more "basic" industry, again in some relevant political way, and thus ought to be more than proportionately represented; or one occasionally hears an argument for the "equilibrium" or "balance" of town and country—a phrase with as many misleading ambiguities as the "balance of nature."

All these arguments are extremely weak and specious and the inequalities between rural and urban districts for the most part must be regarded as anachronisms . . .

The political remedy is naturally difficult, for the electoral laws themselves are usually in the hands of legislatures in which rural elements are overrepresented and what they have they hold in defiance of the democratic logic, but in the solid historical tradition of all entrenched groups . . .

How true! It is exactly what we see in this State today. We have a Legislative Council which has been in the hands of conservatives since its establishment back in the 19th century, and these conservatives are determined to ensure that vested interests will not be threatened by democratic electoral boundaries which could very well result in a lot of them being tipped out on their ears.

Another excuse we hear for the heavy weighting of country votes is distance and communication and the disadvantage of the country dweller. I would like someone from the opposite side of the House to explain to me how half of Armadale and the areas of Kalamunda and Wanneroo are disadvantaged. Why should they be put outside the metropolitan boundary and be classified rural and have a weighted vote? The people in those areas have access to the same radio and television programmes. They have the same local telephone charges, and the same postal services. The same newspaper is thrown over their front fences every morning as is thrown over the front fence of every person in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: They get the country edition.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is a big deal.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is. It is a lot of difference.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Yes.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: To continue: Most of them can get into their cars and drive to the city in about 30 minutes; and all those areas are serviced by MTT buses. Yet we are told by the Government that these people are entitled to a weighted vote.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Only because they are attached to areas which extend much further out.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is no excuse.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Of course it is.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It is a specious, weak argument.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You would like the line drawn further out?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: How many times do I have to say that I do not want any line; that there should be no distinction between the metropolitan and country votes? It is quite obvious that the system has nothing to do with distance or disadvantage, but with political advantage for the conservative parties in this Parliament.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How do we elect our Federal Parliament?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What a mess that is, too.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Let us look at some of our remote areas. If members opposite think I am being too hard because I am referring to the metropolitan area, let us consider the remote areas which some of them represent. I believe there is no longer any excuse to say that country people lack communication facilities in respect of contacting their local members of Parliament. Today local members have available to them much faster transport.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Costs a lot more, too.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: They have good postal facilities as well as radio and television in most areas.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is much more costly in the country than for city dwellers.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Even the north-west is only two hours away by plane.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Mostly paid by the city dwellers.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Which north-west place is only two hours away by plane?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I will tell the Minister. Is Mt. Newman in the north-west?

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Right. I have a brother living in Mt. Newman, and if I want to contact him I can pick up the telephone, dial him STD, and get through to him in the same time it takes me to ring a constituent in Midland Junction.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What does it cost?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What has that to do with it?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: A lot.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: We start to break down the arguments of members opposite and then they shift their ground.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Were you not complaining earlier about the cost of these extra members, but now you are writing off cost?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I referred to the unnecessary cost of extra members of Parliament.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: And now you say it doesn't matter.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I was referring to the ease with which I can contact my brother in Mt. Newman.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Can he get you readily by phone?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: If I want to see him I can get there by plane in 1½ hours.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: How much does it cost?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Have you a brother in Fitzroy Crossing?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: If I want to write my brother a letter it reaches him in a day and a telegram reaches him in only hours. He has a newspaper every day, the ABC radio, and closed circuit TV.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: There is another 40 per cent of the State above that place.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I have not finished yet. Give me time. I will quote another couple of towns. Let us look at Meekatharra. It has a phone service and there are six flights a week which take 2½ hours. Just listen to this: There is a mail service to Meekatharra each day which closes at 3.00 a.m. and arrives there between 11.00 a.m. and midday. If a letter is posted before 3.00 a.m. it gets to Meekatharra in a matter of eight hours. Meekatharra also has radio reception.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would you like to live in Meekatharra?

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: What is wrong with Meekatharra?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Listen to the stupid comment.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You do not answer that one.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Let us consider Port Hedland. It has a telephone service, and a plane service every day of the week with sometimes three to four flights a day which take three hours with one stop and two hours direct. There is also a mail service twice a day. People do not have to ring up all the time. There is a mail service twice a day.

The Hon. J. Heitman: What about the station owners?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: There are two daily mails to Port Hedland, one closing at 3.00 a.m. and arriving at midday on the same day, and the other closing at 8.30 p.m. and arriving on the morning of the following day. Port Hedland has an ABC television and radio service. If it is seriously suggested that the people in those places are disadvantaged—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes, very much so.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: —and as a result they should have a greater say in the running of the State—

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Most certainly.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: —then why not apply the same argument to poor people? Are they not disadvantaged? Just ask any of them how disadvantaged they are when they go to buy a house or even a block of land, or when they have to pay exorbitant hire-purchase interest because they have not the money to pay cash for an essential piece of furniture or a household appliance.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: This applies equally to the people in the country.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am talking about the disadvantaged people. Is the Minister saying the only disadvantaged people are those living in the country? Poor people have no say in fixing the prices of the commodities they buy or the interest they pay. So if it is felt the country people are disadvantaged and should have a weighted vote, why not the poor people, too? I have been into homes in the metropolitan area which could not be beaten anywhere for poverty and degradation. No-one can talk to me about disadvantaged people. Some of these people could not even afford a bus fare, let alone a car, a telephone, or a \$30 000 ram which somebody bought at the Royal Show a few days ago.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think the honourable member is straying away a little from the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am sorry you think that Mr President, because what I am trying to get across to members on the other side is that their main argument seems to be that country people are entitled to a weighted vote because they are disadvantaged.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: They are entitled to service.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: An equivalent service to that received by city people.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: My point is there are many disadvantaged people in the State and they do not all live in the country. Some of them live in the metropolitan area.

It is generally accepted by all reasonable-minded people that as all adults, irrespective of income or property, are affected by Government policies, in fairness all should have a say in choosing the Government of the State. No-one can deny the logical extension of that argument is equal voting rights for all.

The same argument we are hearing today in relation to one-vote-one-value was being waged in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. I have referred to

this matter previously in this Chamber. In 1962, the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of *Baker versus Carr*, ruled that the weight of a citizen's vote could not be made to depend on where he lives, and that the Constitution required equal State legislative representation for all citizens of all places as well as of all races. It has ordered the redistribution of many State Legislatures so that as nearly as practicable one man's vote is equal to another's.

In the United States in 1964, in the case of *Reynolds versus Sims*, Chief Justice Earl Warren had this to say—

The fact that an individual lives here or there is not a legitimate reason for overweighting or diluting the efficacy of his vote. The complexions of societies and civilisation change, often with amazing rapidity. Representation schemes once fair and equitable become archaic and outdated. But the basic principle of representative government remains and must remain unchanged. The weight of a citizen's vote cannot be made to depend on where he lives. A citizen—a qualified voter—is no more or no less so because he lives in the city or on the farm.

Since that time there has been widespread application of the principle of one-vote-one-value in the United States.

If we accept the democratic theory that all men are or should be equal in law, we must accept that the way to achieve it is through the parliamentary system. When we are talking about parliamentary systems we are also talking about electoral systems. In my opinion the three main ingredients in a democratic electoral system are: (1) universal suffrage; (2) one person, one vote; (3) one-vote-one-value. Either we believe in a democratic electoral system or we do not. We cannot go half of the way or two-thirds of the way.

The Hon. Ron Thompson has already referred to the Constitution Review Committee appointed by the Menzies Government in 1956. On this all-party committee the Liberal Party was represented by Sir Nell O'Sullivan, Sir Alexander Downer, Mr Justice Joske, and Senator Wright. The Country Party was represented by the Hon. David Drummond and Mr Len Hamilton. As already mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, that committee unanimously recommended that the Australian Constitution be amended to provide that the number of electors in each seat should not vary by more than one-tenth from the figure established as the quota.

Mr Clive Griffiths tried to suggest that was the case in this State, because the Bill provides that there will be only a 10 per cent variation in metropolitan seats,

and that this is exactly what the Constitution review committee was suggesting. That is utter rubbish. I happen to have the report of the Constitution review committee with me. The committee was not talking about dividing the electorate into city and country seats. It was talking about equal electorates all over Australia. On page 44 of the report, recommendation 300 reads—

The committee reported that it considered a constitutional amendment should be made to ensure that all electoral divisions—

Not just metropolitan divisions but all electoral divisions. To continue—

—for which members of the House of Representatives may be chosen were single member electorates and that the number of electors for each division was, as nearly as practicable, uniform. It has recommended (1958 Report, paragraph 66) an alteration of the Constitution to provide that—

- (1) the Parliament may make laws dividing each State into electoral divisions equal in number to the number of members to be chosen in the State with one member to be chosen for each division;
- (2) upon the division of a State into electoral divisions, the number of electors in a division in a State should not exceed by more than one-tenth, or fall short of by more than one-tenth, a quota ascertained by dividing the total number of electors in the State by the number of members to be chosen in that State;

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you know what that does?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That was a unanimous recommendation of an all-party committee.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It gives control of the political scene in Australia to one little corner of Australia—Sydney and Melbourne.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It gives an equal vote to the majority of the electors, and that is the basis of democracy. I think that clears up the doubt raised by Mr Clive Griffiths as to whether there was any question of the division of the electorate into city and country. Of course there was not. This was the unanimous recommendation of an all-party committee, yet the conservative parties which were represented on that committee have refused since then to recognise the justice and fairness of the committee's recommendation. They have refused to recognise it because they realise their favoured position would be placed in jeopardy and

they would have to compete on equal terms with the Labor Party for the reins of office.

For too long the Liberal and Country Parties have mouthed platitudes about the rights of the individual, yet their actions have shown just how shallow they were. Every member in this Chamber has the opportunity now to stand up and be counted. Members either believe in democracy and the right of equality for all citizens or they do not. Their attitude to this Bill will determine whether they are men of principle or hypocrites. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [8.11 p.m.]: I rise to support this Bill. When I look at the Labor Party's record and the way it has carried out its work over past years, I believe the Labor Party is opposing the Bill with tongue in cheek.

Miss Elliott plucked out of the hat some figures which suited her argument but she failed to mention other areas, particularly the Wanneroo-Toodyay electorate, which are not in favour of the Labor Party, and for good reason. The areas she has drawn out of the hat are not Liberal areas.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I am telling the truth, that is all.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Miss Elliott was pointing to things that suited her argument. We obviously support an extension of the metropolitan area. It was bound to come. The Labor Party suggested it. We are proposing to increase the number of seats in the metropolitan area by four in the Legislative Assembly and two in the Legislative Council. We are supporting greater metropolitan representation.

The recently adopted Labor Party catchcry of "one-vote-one-value" possibly sounds very good and easy to apply, but it is not practicable and is virtually impossible to achieve, as has been proved in many parts of the world. The word "value" can be defined in a number of ways, and no doubt the Labor Party considers "equal value" means one of two things: either equal population in an electorate or an equal number of voters in an electorate. In neither case can equal value be achieved as far as I can see.

I have some figures in relation to equal numbers of enrolled voters. They relate to two areas in the West Province. In one area 20 000 people are on the electoral roll and capable of voting; 75 per cent of them are married couples who have an average of 2.5 children, and the other 25 per cent are single people who are still entitled to vote. We would thus have 15 000 married people and 5 000 single people voting, and 18 750 children, giving a total population in the electorate of 38 750. In another area 10 or 15 miles away in the West Province there are 20 000

people enrolled; 75 per cent of the population are married couples with one child per household, and 25 per cent of the population are single. So there are 15 000 married people, 5 000 single people, and 7 500 children, giving a total population of 27 500.

On those figures, one member of this Chamber would be representing 38 750 people and another member would be representing 27 500 people—a difference of 11 250. If this is equal value it surprises me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is what the Prime Minister said in relation to the last referendum and you opposed it.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will not give all the figures, but if we use equal population in each electorate as a basis the picture will be similar.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Where do the figures come from?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If the honourable member wants any proof, I have it here. I researched the figures.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Where?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: They were obtained from local authorities. For the information of members, Girrawheen townsite averages 4.48 per unit and Mundaring townsite 3.13. That proves my point that there could be a great variation based on either total number of voters or total population, whichever way one looks at it. The result is not equal value.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Gough Whitlam agrees with that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: There would still be a variation of 30 to 40 per cent, no matter which figures we take. I do not think we can kid ourselves that we can ever achieve equal value in the true sense of the word; in other words, one-vote-one-value is a myth and a ploy used by the Labor Party to mislead the public.

Perhaps we should take the top authority in the world. Let us consider the United Nations in which Australia has a strength of one vote and China also has one vote. That is one-vote-one-country. Does the Labor Party suggest that Australia, with a population of 13.5 million should receive one vote and China with a population of something like 870 million should receive 66 votes, because to be consistent the Labor Party would have to support that suggestion? Obviously that is unacceptable for many reasons.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like China to have more than one vote?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Certainly not.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Would you?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is precisely the point I am making. Let us now come nearer home and discuss the representation in the Senate. This State has

16 per cent of the Senate representation, and has something like 8 per cent of the population of Australia. This basis was agreed to when federation was first agreed to by the States. Does the Labor Party suggest that our Senate representation should be halved?

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: That is a game of a different kind.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know that it is. Obviously if members of the Labor Party are to be consistent they would have to support that.

Perhaps we should take the Australian Labor Party Federal Executive. It has adopted the same principle as the Senate. Are members of the Opposition going to suggest that New South Wales, with five times the population of Western Australia, should have five times the voting strength of Western Australia on the executive? Of course not, and for obvious reasons.

I believe that the United Kingdom is a prime example of a place in which the conditions are ideal, and yet it has still not achieved one-vote-one-value. The United Kingdom has an area of 50 335 square miles with a population of 55.3 million people. With all the vast experience of that country it has never been able to achieve this mythical one-vote-one-value. The people realise there are other factors apart from population. They realise they have economic, social, and regional interests, communication, density of population, remoteness and distance, plus many other factors; and these are matters which it is essential to consider. Obviously the United Kingdom has never been able to achieve one-vote-one-value.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Did you say remoteness was a factor?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This is one of the factors to be considered when thinking about the number of people in electorates. There are areas in Britain which are fairly remote—for example, Dartmoor.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you agree that the United Kingdom would be closer to one-vote-one-value than we are?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Yes, it is closer to that than Australia is. Nevertheless, I believe if it is impossible to achieve that in the United Kingdom then it is even more impossible to achieve it in Western Australia with an area of something like one million square miles and a population of a little over one million people; where the Lower North Province has 463 850 square miles and 5 838 voters compared with the South-East Metropolitan Province which has an area of 96.4 square miles with 93 000 voters.

I think the people of those areas have only two things in common. The first is that they live in Western Australia, and the second is that they have the same State Government. Of course, all the electorates differ completely. I would ask the

members of the Labor Party how they intend to represent those people and how they would consider people who have no mains electricity, no sealed roads, and no shopping facilities, who live in areas which are isolated for weeks by rain, who have to travel 50 miles to visit a neighbour, and whose children, if they wish to receive adequate education, have to travel or be boarded out.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And loading the vote changes that?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Well, I believe mention was made of the backbone of this country. These people are the backbone and the lifeblood of this State; they have been for many years and will continue to be. However, apparently the Labor Party does not consider they should be adequately represented. I do not know what the Labor Party would suggest; I would imagine its answer would be that the party is not worried too much about the country vote, and that seems to be vindicated by the actions of Labor members of this Chamber over the last few months.

Again, let us compare the productivity of country people with the productivity of city people.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You had better be careful with that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: There is a vast difference. The people in the metropolitan area receive vastly greater rewards in every sense of the word for a lower production average. Of course, the Labor Party was happy with the present situation at one time when it completely controlled the mining areas; but now when the mining and the agricultural areas—in particular the mining areas—have realised that the Labor Party is destroying them and that they have no future at all with a Labor Government in power, the members of the Labor Party cry, "Foul; it isn't fair."

That is all very well, but at least the Liberal Party and the Country Party recognise that people, wherever they may live, should receive proper recognition and understanding of their differing circumstances, and should receive adequate representation. We have 93 000 voters in the South-East Metropolitan Province, 40 000 in the West Province, and 5 838 in the province represented by Mr Dellar and Mr Berry. I do not know what the number of voters should be but I believe that in order to achieve proper representation in different areas with different circumstances those sorts of figures are justified. In other words, I think we should divide this State into units, for the reasons I gave earlier.

As I said previously, this Bill proposes to create an additional four seats in the Assembly and an additional two seats in the Council. The way members of the Labor Party are performing one would

think they have no chance of winning any of those new seats. However, we know they have a good chance of winning some. If we have our way they will not win any, but we must be honest and say they have every chance of winning some of them. Members of the Labor Party are quite happy about that; the only thing they object to is that they will not take those seats at the expense of country representation. That is their main objection.

We heard the Hon. Lyla Elliott mention expense, and yet in 1954 the Hawke Government proposed to increase the representation in the Legislative Assembly from 50 to 52. This was based on a population in Western Australia of 640,000, and we now have just a little under 1.1 million. I think the correct figure is 1.094 million. Now the Labor Party is crying because this proposal does not suit it, and it is saying, "We do not need an increase, we can't afford it." Members of the Government cannot understand how Labor members can argue in that fashion, particularly when there are Labor members in the other place at this time who supported that proposition of the Hawke Government.

If we go back to 1937 we find that the redistribution Bill presented by the Labor Party in that year proposed 11 seats to represent 27 697 people. This, of course, was during the boom period of the Labor Party in the mining areas. Yet at the same time that party proposed 17 seats to represent 131 214 people in the metropolitan area; obviously it was for a very good reason that the mining areas supported the Labor Party.

Again, in 1954, the Electoral Districts and Provinces Adjustment Bill proposed a vote-value, and in the outer mining area it was proposed to give people three votes for every one vote in the metropolitan area. Of course, this was a mining gerrymander. So when members of the Labor Party want to talk about gerrymandering I suggest they look back at their own record and search their consciences.

We have heard the familiar cry regarding the Legislative Council being weighted and wrongly set up. I believe the Labor Party takes it for granted that it can never win control of this House. It is not really surprising that it does not win control of this place when one sees the bitterness displayed by members opposite; and it is not surprising that the public do not vote for them when they say, "We will get rid of the Legislative Council."

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is the reason we want the votes; to get rid of the Council.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course, and the public knows that. I believe the only reason the people do not vote for the Labor Party in Legislative Council elections is that the people want two Houses

of Parliament; they are happy with the situation and will continue to be happy with it.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You want to talk to some of them.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: At each election you lose ground, so obviously you want to get rid of it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What about Bjelke-Petersen in Queensland?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If we look back in *Hansard* we will see that in 1954 the Labor Party praised the Queensland Government for getting rid of the Legislative Council in that State. It praised the Queensland Government and said how wonderfully the system was working there. I have been in this place about 18 months and during that time I have not heard too much comment by the Labor Party about the Queensland Government in respect of how well it is doing without a Legislative Council.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Have they got a Government there?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We realise that the Labor Party would be happy to see the Legislative Council disappear provided it is in power. If we had only a Legislative Assembly in this State and the Liberal Party had a vast majority, the Labor Party would be screaming for a second House and saying, "We need the protection of an Upper House", because that would suit it. Viewed in the light of world experience, the comments I have made, and the examples I have given of the known activities of the Labor Party both in the State sphere and the Federal sphere, the opposition to this measure is just so much humbug and hypocrisy, and the suggestion of a gerrymander is totally unjustified.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Who drew the map?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: You are a member of the Government.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The Minister told you who drew the map.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: He doesn't know!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The point is that it was drawn on natural boundaries.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is like pinning the tail on the donkey.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are joking!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not joking. I know almost every inch of the area involved and I would suggest that if members of the opposition drive around the area and have a look at it they will find the boundary is drawn along natural boundaries in the main.

The Hon. R. Thompson: When was it drawn?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know; I am looking at it now as Mr Thompson is looking at it. Mr Thompson is basing his remarks on his own activities in the past.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It was drawn on natural boundaries to take all the Labor voters out of the Kalamunda area.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Why should we do that when the bloke concerned won it with a record majority?

The PRESIDENT: Order please! Is it necessary to call order three times? The honourable Gordon Masters.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Thank you, Mr President. The areas proposed to be removed from Kalamunda are not Labor areas; the voting there is about 50-50. After I had been in this place for six years I would have ensured they voted Liberal. This change does not represent a Labor loss or a Liberal gain; the line was drawn to take in an area—Forrestfield—in which there is to be massive development and where thousands of people will live. If the boundary is not moved to the hills on this occasion it will have to be moved in two or three years' time. If we take the Girrawheen, Carine Glades, Greenwood, and Duncraig areas we see the boundary is drawn just above those developments.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Who drew it?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know; certainly I did not. I will lose some very good areas: Carine Glades, Greenwood, and Duncraig. If we talk about the Mundaring electorate—which no-one has mentioned, of course, because it is held by a Labor member—there again there is a loss to the country and a gain to the metropolitan area. The area of High Wycombe votes 50-50, so there is no loss there; the line is simply a natural boundary and obviously that area had to be included in the metropolitan area.

I think the suggestion of a gerrymander is ridiculous and unjustified and indicates that members of the Labor Party have not taken the trouble to travel around the areas concerned to check up for themselves. The suggestion of one-vote-one-value possibly should be enlarged as far as the Labor Party is concerned; it should be "One-vote-one-value where it suits us, and to hell with the country voters".

I believe we are doing the right thing by extending the metropolitan area and by giving adequate representation to the country areas to allow them to be properly represented according to their differing circumstances. I strongly support the Bill.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [8.30 p.m.]: I hesitated a little before I rose, as I thought, because of the attitudes that have been expressed here this evening and the great value that some members opposite seem to place on the question of granting two votes to one, that the number of speakers this evening from the other side of the House, speaking conservatively, would have been at least three to one compared with the number of speakers from this side of the House, having regard for all the principles involved. However, I notice that many are loth to stand on their feet to justify the action they are taking on this amendment to the Electoral Districts Act.

The longer I remain in this House and the older I get the more I fear for the democratic nature of the parliamentary system under which we have lived for so long and enjoyed so much. When I hear a young man like the Hon. Gordon Masters speaking in the way he has in denigrating the very basis of democratic elections—that is, universal suffrage, one vote to each elector and one-vote-one-value—I sometimes fear for the consequences he may suffer when he becomes older, because democracy comes under attack by a gerrymander of electoral boundaries.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: We have had an electoral quota system ever since this Parliament was established.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: This Bill seeks to extend the metropolitan boundaries by some miles and members opposite are trying to justify that in some respects. I will not say it is a deliberate gerrymander, but if members opposite are seeking to amend the Electoral Districts Act they should amend it in a way that will bring some form of parliamentary democratic representation to this State. Amending the Act in the way they seek to at present will not achieve that. There is no question that by amending the present system they are aiming at giving some people a vote that is equal to two and three times the value of a vote held by others and, in some instances, the ratio is 15:1. In effect, they are heading towards achieving one-party control of this State, and that is very dangerous indeed. I would not be one to support that philosophy in my own party; that is, to have a situation where the Labor Party could never be put out of office.

However, by this Bill it would seem that members opposite are trying to achieve that objective for their own party. Heaven help us if we ever get into a situation in this State which can be compared with that in Queensland at present where the Premier can govern that State on a vote of 26 per cent of the people. Let us take a good look at ourselves to see where we are heading. We dither too much with

electoral boundaries and get too far away from the democratic principles that are enunciated in one-vote-one-value. That is democracy. Let us have no misunderstanding about that whatsoever. Experts throughout the world for a long time have agreed with that principle and they continue to do so.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It is only a question of the political belief that one holds.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Of course it is not. In the Federal sphere there is the principle of one-vote-one-value, and as I indicated to the Minister by way of interjection, his party has done extremely well in the Federal sphere on the principle of one-vote-one-value. Federal Liberal and Country Party Governments have been in office for a far longer period than Labor Governments. That is a system that has to be accepted, and that is what we should be aiming at in this place. However, the Bill before us at present is against that principle; it does not even go towards it—in fact, it is going away from it.

I say that because, at least under the principal Act people living in one area of the State are granted twice the voting value of people living in some other area. However, the Government now seeks to do away with that system and it will worsen the situation in some respects. Later on I will explain to members opposite how the Government will worsen it. It is on these grounds that we oppose this Bill; that it is moving away from the principles in which we believe when dealing with electoral reform.

The principal Act is due for reform. For 85 continuous years in this Chamber we have had one party in control. That is not a good situation. I do not believe members opposite, who believe in democracy, would agree it is a good situation.

In 38 Legislative Council elections Conservative Governments have won control of this House 38 times. If anyone can tell me that this has been achieved by a sound democratic system I have been living in a world of make believe for a long time. Members opposite remain strangely quiet when it is pointed out to them that 63 per cent of the people enrolled for the Legislative Assembly elect 45 per cent of the members of that House. The remaining 55 per cent are elected by 37 per cent of the rural vote. To me that does not seem to be fair and equitable.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Because you do not live in the country. You live in the metropolitan area where you have everything put on your plate.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am only speaking of what democracy is all about, and what we should be aiming at in a democratic society.

The Hon. J. Heitman: Your people have one idea about it, and we have another.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Mr Cooley has no idea of it.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr Lewis has a misconception of me. He thinks I have something against country people, but that is not true. I have said in this place many times that I have a great deal of respect for country people, and many people in country areas have respect for me. I believe that, as legislators in this Parliament, we should be upholding the principles of democratic elections, but what we are seeking to do in this Bill is to go away from those principles instead of travelling towards them.

I would like to quote to the House a passage from a book which deals with the very question of which I have been speaking. The author is E. T. Brown, and the book is titled, *Sovereign People*. This passage is relevant and I hope members opposite will listen to it. It reads as follows—

In a civilised and rational commonwealth, the people, the nation itself, is the only legitimate or conceivable source of law. The parliament, the executive, and the judiciary are all representatives of the sovereign people. Through those three agencies the sovereign respectively makes, administers, and interprets the law, and only its ultimate authority gives them any claim to authority or obedience. It goes without saying, therefore, that this representation of the people's mind and will should be as genuine and exact as possible, and consequently the method of choosing representatives is of critical importance. Let us consider only the plainest case, the election of members of parliament. What sort of grounds have we for saying that a given parliament presents an exact and genuine picture of the people's mind?

To be truly representative, the parliament would have to be chosen in such a way that every elector's vote had an equal influence, that is, every member of parliament would have to represent the same number of electors. And when we say "represent" we do not mean, of course, in the merely formal and legalistic sense in which a member is said to "represent" every elector in his constituency. In actual fact and common sense, the member represents (at the best) the will and opinion *only of those electors who voted for him*.

There are a number of other passages in this book that support the principle of one-vote-one-value. The book does make reference to the backward state of Australia and no doubt it is pointing in particular to Western Australia and the manner by which that State elects its representatives to Parliament.

It has often been said here that members of the Liberal Party vote according to their conscience and I think they should look at their conscience in respect of this Bill that endeavours to alter a system which will give to people in some areas greater representation than those in other areas. We can see the solution for greater electoral reform which is fair and equitable. I have made some reference to what the boundaries should be. I think the Labor Party believes that the ocean should be the western boundary and the borders of the Northern Territory and South Australia should be the eastern boundaries. Also that the State should be divided into an equal number of electorates based on equal representation. I have already made the point that the Federal House and Federal elections are conducted on the principle of one-vote-one-value.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: And the metropolitan area would control the entire political scene in Western Australia.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Like the previous speaker I have taken out some figures of my own on the question of representation. We find, from the figures given to us in the second reading speech, that in the metropolitan area 405 232 electors are represented by 27 members in the Legislative Assembly and in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area 219 737 electors have 24 representatives in another place. In the north-west there are 19 473 electors. The point I am trying to make is that the average number of people per Legislative Assembly seat, having regard to the tolerances allowed for facilities available, could be as high as 16 500—I am now speaking of the metropolitan area. In some parts of the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area, taking the lowest figure and using the 15 per cent tolerance allowed in the Bill, the number of people enrolled would be 7 800. Therefore, taking the two figures together, it does tend to worsen the situation compared to what is now provided in the Act; that is, in regard to the vote in the country having a value twice that of the vote in the city electorates.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You have taken the extremes, of course, and not the average.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Yes. In the Legislative Council provinces the highest figure could be 74 000 electors and the lowest 23 000; that is, something like 3:1. I am speaking now of the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area. Of course, in the north-west, the difference becomes greater and greater and in some instances a situation is reached where there is almost a difference of 14:1 in the voting power. If anyone can justify a situation such as that I would be pleased to hear him; that is, where electors in some provinces in the north-west have a voting

ratio of 14:1 compared to electors in other provinces.

The Hon. J. Heitman: When all those seats were represented by Labor it was a good thing.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I do not believe it is a good thing, regardless of whether the Liberal Party, Country Party, or Labor Party is in office. That is a bad situation and the sooner we rectify it the better.

When we look at the figures for some of the areas there are many contradictions in respect of what Mr Heitman has said. I think the Minister, in his second reading speech said that the principal reason for granting a greater tolerance in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area, and particularly in the more remote parts of the State, was that it was more difficult to have a proper regard for every criteria of community interest, means of communication, distance from the capital, and physical features if the numerical allowance were limited to 10 per cent.

I do not want to encourage interjections but I ask: Why is it that Pilbara has 11 855 electors, even having full regard to the distance they are from the capital city, and Rockingham has 10 335 electors? These are the figures that were supplied by the Hon. D. H. O'Neill in another place.

I will repeat what the Minister said. He said—

The principal reason for allowing a greater allowance in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area is that, particularly in the more remote parts of the State, it is more difficult to give proper regard to other criteria of community interest.

The point I am trying to make is that the Pilbara has 11 885 electors, Rockingham has 10 335, Mundaring 9 759, Kalamunda 11 305, and Avon has 7 753 electors.

These are all near metropolitan seats and even though they have less people in their electorates than is contained in the Pilbara seat—which is in the remote area to which the Minister referred in his notes—they have greater representation. To me that seems to be a complete misnomer; it appears that something has gone wrong.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Do you suggest we should have somebody else there as well?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If we evened it out according to the ALP policy of one-vote-one-value these things would be ironed out. If the State were broken up into 81 electorates, the people who Mr Tozer represents would be no worse off. On the figures supplied he is representing something like 8 000 or 9 000 people and, after all is said and done, what is wrong with that?

It does not matter what happens in a democracy, because it is the people who have the last say and, if the Government

is not acting as it should, the people will tip it out if they are given this equal representation.

There should not be a situation where a party cannot lose, and that is the situation as it relates to the election of members to this House. What is proposed in regard to the Legislative Assembly would make the position even worse in that respect.

If we look at the other situation—and I again use the electorate of Pilbara as an example—the people in the Gascoyne electorate have three times the vote of the people in the Pilbara; and yet as I understand it the Pilbara is more remote than the Gascoyne. Perhaps Mr Withers may say it is not, but I believe the Pilbara electorate is further north of the State than the Gascoyne; and yet the value of the vote to the people in the Gascoyne is three times greater than that given to the people in the Pilbara.

There seems to be a great deal of inequality and injustice associated with the present electoral districts legislation; it appears to be crying out for some kind of reform.

While people may not accept this from me, I do believe there is a need for representation in remote areas. I think that previous speakers have indicated the remoteness is not as great today as it has been in years gone by. I do think there are ways and means to overcome this; if people, due to their remoteness, are not getting the service they should from their member of Parliament there are ways and means that can be used to overcome the position. We could, perhaps, provide, more electoral offices than are provided for the people in the metropolitan area. Apart from this we could perhaps improve the communication or provide better travelling facilities for members. These difficulties could be overcome in this day and age.

Some of the provisions which were incorporated in the Act which, because of the special circumstances, previously justified people having a greater value in their votes in remote areas are not there in the same proportion now. But that is not all that is involved in political representation; it is not merely a case of whether a member can go to his electors.

How many of us go voluntarily to our electors? Is it not usual for the electors to come to us? It is very rarely that members go out to their electors; though they may do so at election time.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You would be surprised.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am not surprised at anything that is said or done by Mr Ferry. It is, however, more the exception than the rule for a member to go to his elector; it is generally the elector who comes to the member.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You obviously do not understand the meaning of country representation.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The fact that we must go to the people who elect us is not all that is involved in representation. Is not the representation in this House more important in respect of the laws made here?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Not from some of the speeches I have heard lately.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: We all know how superior Mr MacKinnon is in respect of the speeches he makes, but we all try to do our best.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Keep trying.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Representation in this House is most important. When I cross the floor to vote for the 70 000 people in my electorate should I be placed in the same position as the member who represents 7 000 people? That is not giving the people concerned true representation and something should be done to correct it. If members believe in that sort of thing they should weight the votes in this House just as they believe the votes should be weighted outside in the electorate.

Who is it who will say that it is more difficult to contact the 7 000 people in the Lower North Province than it is for me to contact the 70 000 people in my electorate or for the Hon. Grace Vaughan to contact the 90 000 people in her electorate.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The people in your electorate can visit you or ring you up at the cost of a few cents. A lot of the people in my electorate cannot afford to contact me.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They cannot afford you.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr Withers should be able to help them as a result of the allowances he gets.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Cut it out.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If he were to write one letter a year to every elector in his district it would cost him only \$126.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You are talking about the penny post days.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am sorry about that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You have forgotten we have a Labor Government in Canberra.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr Withers could by means of better allowances, and so on, reach his electors more easily than I could, reach the electors in say the North-East Province.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You only have 58 square miles.

many of those obstacles mentioned years ago have now ceased to exist. We should at least be getting on the track because I recognise, as Mr Masters pointed out, some of the difficulties which apply to one-vote-one-value. But, at least we should be getting near to it. In this instance the boundaries are bad enough but if we go deeply into the contents of the Bill we find it becomes a gerrymander of the worst possible type.

A gerrymander is a device used by a political party to maintain itself in office. I believe that in a democracy the people should have the right not only to reject a Government, but also to eject or reject their representative. That is not possible under the system which operates today. I want to be quite clear in getting to the kernel of the matter. I have yet to be proved wrong that in the case of a gerrymander in the metropolitan area a Liberal blue ribbon seat becomes more blue ribbon, and in order to create that situation a neighbouring Labor blue ribbon seat becomes more blue ribbon. Such an arrangement allows those people who hold the seats to have no fear of being pushed out, whether they are competent or incompetent. That is one of the side issues of a gerrymander, and it is not very good. We should abide by the democratic principle that each electorate vote should be of equal value.

When a Government seeks to make it impossible to be voted out of office by a majority of the electors that Government has ceased to earn the title of a responsible Government. The same applies in the case of Parliament. Although I am not particularly overwhelmed with what has happened I think the actions of the present coalition were predictable because it is a party which puts power before principle, and before people. The coalition has a history of such actions.

Whether a man is rich or poor, whether he is a clerk or a farmer, or whether he is a doctor or a labourer, he has an inalienable right to have an equal vote in the election of a Government. However, that will not occur under the proposal now before us, and it does not happen at the present time. The situation will be made even worse. It does not matter where a man lives, he has the right to equal representation in Parliament. The notion that one man should have more than one vote or that his vote should be worth less than that of his neighbour belongs to the politics of 100 years ago.

Miss Elliott, and other speakers, referred to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Review. I do not want to weary members of this Chamber with the result of that review, but it set out the very points I have just mentioned.

One form of gerrymander referred to in the report was the creation of electoral divisions in which there are substantial disparities in the number of enrolled

voters in order to secure for a political party greater representation than it should have. That is exactly what Government speakers have said this Bill will do. In all its present forms the device is thoroughly subversive of the democratic process. As a matter of fact, it will return to the State of Western Australia in a more stringent form, the question of a rotten borough—something which went out of fashion in the United Kingdom some 100 years ago.

The people who elect Governments should have the right to dismiss those Governments, and it should be a quick, clear decision. The people should also have the right and the privilege to dismiss a member of any political party who might represent them if he is not doing the job which they elected him to do.

I recollect a slogan used in South Australia a short time ago. South Australia is probably the most enlightened State, and is progressing to the stage where it is more in keeping with the modern world. One of the questions associated with the South Australian slogan was, "Why should a metropolitan drink waiter have a vote equal to the value of the vote of a soldier settler fighting to build a farm?" The answer was, "Why should a country drink waiter have a vote four times greater than the value of the vote of a metropolitan brain surgeon?"

The first principle suggests that property is to be trusted, and the second that people are to be trusted. I would go for the second principle.

We have heard all about what is needed in the country, and how country people should be represented. I believe those people should be properly represented, but they should not have a voting weight of up to 15 times the value of a metropolitan elector.

Mr Gordon Masters raised the question of the productivity of the country. At the risk of getting into trouble with people living in the country, I must say that I tire of hearing country shire presidents commencing their speeches by saying, "Well, we in the country know what a day's work is." One can only assume that no-one outside the country knows what a day's work is. I suppose I could take those country shire presidents to the fellows who work at the blast furnaces at Kwinana where those workers may be able to tell the country shire presidents what a day's work really is.

Mr Masters in mentioning the productivity of the country introduced a new element into this argument. He said that productivity was a reason that country people should have more representation. I do not deny the role played by our country people, but let us not fall for the trap that they are the total backbone of this country. As I have said previously, I accept that in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States the larger cities grew up

out of rural communities. However, Australia came into being on the eve of an industrial revolution and we grew backwards; the cities were established long before the country communities and before rural populations existed. I am open to correction but I believe that about one-ninth of our population is involved in rural industries producing about one-ninth of our gross national product. As I said, I do not denigrate the country areas or the country people; they make their contribution. However, do not let us over-play the role of the country dwellers.

Until the States get rid of the situation of an electoral arrangement which means one thing, and one thing only, it is futile to regard them as constitutional instruments of decentralisation. There has been an attempt to put over that argument tonight. If it has not been said tonight it can be read in the record. The theory that development follows representation is rubbish. Development will go to a desert where there are no people as long as there are resources in that desert and it is profitable for someone to gather those resources. So I do not accept that argument at all. It is a lot of rubbish and political waffle.

I do not want to continue at length, except to repeat that what is being attempted now, and what is to be successful, is a very cleverly drafted gerrymander. The person—or persons—who drew the lines on the map did their homework extremely well. I said by way of interjection that perhaps the Liberal Party, in drawing the boundaries, played the game of "pin the tail on the donkey". However, I do not think the person with the tail was blindfolded because I think he was able to see where he was sticking the pin.

I would also remind members in this Chamber that the Premier, on a couple of occasions, has said that he did not intend to introduce an electoral Bill. Of course, we all know that the Premier can say something today and do something different tomorrow.

The Premier changed his mind after a survey of the Liberal Party's chances of re-election on present boundaries. After the results of the survey were known the Liberal Party quickly got onto the job of drawing up a new map.

If the people are denied the right to tip out a Government and, more importantly, the right to tip out representatives irrespective of their political colour, they will have no respect for Parliament. I again repeat that when a blue ribbon Liberal seat is strengthened in the metropolitan area a neighbouring Labor blue ribbon seat is also strengthened. Both seats can then be held by incompetent members of Parliament and they can hold those seats for life. On that basis alone, the legislation is bad because it will not be possible to tip out members who do not do their job.

Mr Masters, who hails from the other side of the world, did not say that in the United Kingdom the electorates are pretty evenly balanced.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They are very evenly balanced.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: Mr Masters also knows from experience that when a member in the United Kingdom does not do the right thing the people simply do not vote against him; they do not vote at all. Such a member is pretty soon back on the tiles.

For the life of me, I do not know how much longer this situation will last. However, I can assure this House it will not last much longer because people will become tired of the type of Government which cannot be removed and more and more decisions will be taken outside of Parliament. If anyone wants to argue that point with me, on any occasion, I will provide many instances where people are just taking no notice of the law, particularly with regard to what is happening in this Parliament. This Parliament gives every indication of setting up some kind of dictatorship—and it is not even a paternal dictatorship. The Government gives every indication of cementing firmly in power its own party which has pointed this State in the direction of a police State.

I refer to the editorials in the weekend papers which echo what I have said. I refer to the question of the fuel and energy legislation, and the Bill currently before the House which will allow fauna wardens the right to enter properties without a warrant. I oppose the Bill.

The question of a Government and Cabinet doing exactly as they want without any fear will be put out by the popular will of the people. When these things happen then all the traditions that have been built up over 600 years suddenly crumble overnight. I want to assure the Chamber that I am not suggesting we will have a violent revolution, but everything comes to an end eventually. Instead of the transitional changes that have taken place in other parts of the world which adopted the Westminster system, we suddenly have a movement to the extreme left or to the extreme right. One only has to read the recent history of America to see that it has adopted better electoral processes and eliminated the added weight for rural votes. We have been told about the various cases in America many times in this House, and I will not repeat the decisions given in American courts.

Undoubtedly there is some need to ensure adequate representation for country people, but certainly there is no need to do the sort of thing that this measure sets out to do. Not only will it set out to do this, but also it will do it under the guise that some good will be achieved. That is simply not so. I suppose, as a political theorist, I could say that this is sure to happen,

and I particularly should be pleased about it, because as time goes by it will sharpen the conflict and it will have a counter-productive effort to what might be expected. Suddenly all the things we have been kidding and rorting about for years will come unstuck, and these very pleasant traditions we have will be in shreds around us.

Before I sit down let me remind members that I will ask them to have another look at activity and behaviour of this type. I respect the traditions of this country and I respect the traditions that have been carried all over the world by English speaking people. We are living now in a world completely different from the one five years ago, and certainly a world completely different from the one when this Chamber was set up. It is a lot later than we think. We are living in a period where our economic security is certainly challenged, whether a Labor Government remains in power in Canberra, or whether some other Government is in power. The days of easy Government are over for all of us because the economic honeymoon is over. In a situation such as this, it becomes an extremely dangerous exercise to pass legislation of the type we have before us.

The countries which have adopted the Westminster system have overhauled it continually. They have reshaped and remodelled it so that it gives true representation and it provides a safety valve for people who wish to remove the Government or alter the representation to do so. That is why our system has been able to endure all these hundreds of years. If members think we are any different from the people living in the United States, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom, they are very wrong. Growing up in this country today is an informed group of people from many parts of the world, and these people do not go along with the principle espoused in the measure. Maybe there are some excuses for our people who have lived here all their lives. Perhaps we started with the wrong background—I just do not know.

One night I was discussing with someone our electoral system and our apathy. We came to the conclusion that perhaps Australia had been settled by the failures. Other parts of the world were settled by people escaping from religious tyranny and other evils. I am warning members—not that I will blow their brains out—that they must start to think for themselves because nothing remains the same. Something we could do a few years ago we will not be able to do a few years from now, and any legislation aimed at setting one party in continual power, whether it be the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, or any other party, sooner or later—and it will be sooner—will blow democracy asunder.

I oppose this Bill, and I oppose it not only as a member of the Labor Party, but also as an Australian, a Western Australian, and a person who has lived in the

parliamentary democracy under which we have progressed to this moment of time. I said this parliamentary democracy was over 600 years old, but it is nearly 700 years old. If the principle espoused in this measure is allowed to continue—and it is continuing at every level in this country—our parliamentary democracy will not see out another 10 years. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [9.21 p.m.]: By use of analogy, the Opposition attack on this Bill can be described as a termite pincer movement. As anyone who knows anything about termites will tell us—

The Hon. R. Thompson: We are attacking termites, so I suppose we should have a pincer movement!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: —a termite soldier does no constructive work—

The Hon. R. Thompson: You would know all about them, I imagine.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: —other than enact a posture of fierce countenance. This is his main job, and he does it by waving his soft pincers at anything that frightens him, imagined or otherwise.

A few hundred million years ago the termite had formidable pincers.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not tell me you are going to give the termites a vote too?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: The soldier termites followed the worker termites around and the worker termites fed the soldier termites in the belief that if they fed them they would wind up with a strong virile defence of their colony. Over the millions of years of evolution, the worker termites kept the soldier termites.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We knew that you knew nothing about the Electoral Districts Act, but this is quite interesting.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I said that this is an analogy. The worker termites kept the soldier termites even though the soldier termites had become virtually useless and their pincers were soft.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I think you are trying to white ant me.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I described the Opposition's attack on this Bill as a termite pincer movement because the termite soldier is conditioned to think that he is doing right by the termite colony in anything he does. Of course, I believe this is what the Opposition is doing. It believes it is doing right by the people it represents.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I did not know you were an entomologist amongst your other accomplishments.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I read a book on it once. In a sense the termite

regiment is a sham because its weapons are absolutely useless, soft, and flabby.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you read the Bill?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Like the Opposition members who oppose this measure, the soldier termites are also blind. This soft pincer attack appears to be in two parts. The first is an attack on the Bill from the right, and the second is an attack on this House from the left. I will deal firstly with the pincer movement from the right.

Some Opposition members expressed the view that they supported the one-man-one-vote of equal value system. They endeavour to destroy our present electoral system by criticism. It seems strange to me that the Labor Party never got around to passing any constructive legislation when it was in Government.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you know why?

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: We have not seen any in the last 18 months.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Opposition members know that during the Tonkin Government's term of office electoral legislation was presented in another place but it was never passed. What happened to this measure? The Labor Party had a majority in another place at that time. I find it hard to believe that any person who sincerely objects to the present system and the imbalance between city and country votes should speak against the Bill.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Because it has termites!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Surely this Bill will give better representation in the metropolitan electorates, and this is what the Labor Party is after. It is one step towards—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No-one said anything about better representation in metropolitan electorates.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I can appreciate academic debates on the one-man-one-vote principle and it may surprise members opposite to hear that I agree with the democratic theory of one-vote-one-value. I cannot see how I could deny this good sound democratic theory. However, to put the theory into practice we need certain rules. To make this principle work in practice, we require governed areas with electoral similarity—similarity in size, communication systems, living standards, growth rates, productivity, ethnic groups, and even services. We all know we cannot achieve these parameters, at least within this century. We might in centuries to come, but the Bill is a step towards this as it will give better representation.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: To the metropolitan area?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Yes, in the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area may continue to expand so that people are evenly distributed right throughout the State. If Bills of this nature are considered by successive Governments, the aim of the Labor Party will be achieved.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: If that is all your argument is, you might as well sit down.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Eventually in future centuries we may have one-vote-one-value, but of course, we must have the parameters which I mentioned before. Parliament has accepted guidelines to allow people to be reasonably represented right throughout the State with this imbalance of voting that Opposition members have referred to. It gives some chance to the country people to be represented, even though they live in electorates with great land masses and where communication is costly and where there is a lesser standard than that experienced in the metropolitan area. Incidentally, Mr Cooley earlier mentioned the sum of \$126 for communication if I wrote to each elector once per year. I would like to point out that if I wrote once to every constituent of mine it would cost about \$3 000 a year.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I conceded I had made a mistake. You did not have to drag it up.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Also, the people living in remote areas have very harsh living standards and certainly prices are much higher than in the metropolitan area. Of course, there are some exceptions to this statement. I am referring particularly to the North Province which is represented by Mr John Tozer and myself. Many services available in the metropolitan area are taken for granted. I am not referring simply to Government services, such as the bureaucratic offices which we lack, but the many other services we do not have. Initially the land in remote areas is owned by the Government, and to purchase land one must first of all apply to the Government. People wishing to settle in the remote areas are usually not great administrators. They are adventurous people and they set out to help develop the country. When they wish to purchase land, they cannot go down the street to an estate agent to tell him that they wish to buy a block of land on which to build a house, a business, or whatever else they like. There are no estate agents in the north.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: That would be an advantage, would it not?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I can assure Miss Elliott that it is not an advantage. If someone wishes to purchase land, he must make it known to whomever he can that he wants land. He has to appeal to

the Government, and if he knows the ropes, initially he writes to the department. As members know, it would be impossible for him to continually telephone the Lands and Surveys Department. It is quite possible for a person residing in the metropolitan area to ring the Lands and Surveys Department every day, and it is not very costly. But it is impractical to telephone Perth continually from the north. These are just some of the things the city people take for granted.

The guidelines of electoral laws are debated in Parliament to achieve the best possible results for the people. Surely members can see the advantage that this Bill will give to people in the metropolitan area; they will have slightly better representation. I think the legislation also takes a little step towards the one-vote-one-value principle because as I explained to Miss Elliott a few moments ago, if similar Bills are considered by succeeding Governments, as the people spread throughout the State members opposite will have what they want.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I cannot see that. The number of electors is increasing, but the number of seats is not being increased in proportion.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You leave the country seats as they are. How will that improve the situation?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: If we take a hypothetical situation where—God forbid—the whole metropolitan area covered the State, and if we then considered legislation such as this, we would achieve the principle of one-vote-one-value.

However, if the Opposition wishes to grab instant theoretical democracy by implementing the principle of one-vote-one-value, with its associated impractical workability—

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: It has been done in other countries, so it must be practical.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS:—why do they not propose legislation which this House and the other House could consider?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: How far would it get in this place?

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Members opposite did not even introduce such legislation when they were in control.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Oh yes we did.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: When was that done? I know it was put forward, but the previous Government never passed such legislation.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Because it did not have a constitutional majority.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Simple!

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: I will now refer to the attack on this House by the left pincer movement. This movement is

not clearly defined because the forces appear to be in three regiments, with different commanders.

I have already referred to the first regiment, which concerns itself with the unequal weighting of the provinces. The second regiment is concerned with a bicameral system of Parliament, which it wishes to destroy. It should be known by the Opposition that a bicameral system moderates any left wing or right wing Government. An extreme right wing Government is just as dangerous as an extreme left wing Government, and an Upper House, if functioning correctly, will modify those types of Government.

The third regiment of this pincer movement is concerned with the power of the Legislative Council. But let us face it: That regiment would be like the Vichy Government of the last world war in that it would be quite willing to swap its allegiance if it felt it could control its own regimental house.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Quite wrong.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: If members opposite were in control of this Legislative Council, I feel they would change their views on this place.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: No way.

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS: Let us ponder our responsibilities. Should we ignore the fact that the metropolitan area is growing rapidly? Should we blindly stick to an established variance allowance for electoral numbers, regardless of changing circumstances? Should we resist the increase in political representation, regardless of population growth? If we answer "Yes" to these questions, we would not be responsible legislators. I have considered this Bill, and I support it.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [9.35 p.m.]: I was hoping to hear more from Government supporters, but apparently they are very reluctant to defend their own legislation.

THE PRESIDENT: Order! I was going to give the call to the Minister for Justice, who rose first to speak.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I appreciate that, Mr President. We have heard a very painful effort by Mr Withers to justify the measure before us; more specious arguments would be difficult to find. There is one aspect of this legislation of which I believe the people of Western Australia and members of Parliament are entitled to further explanation. Perhaps the Minister will enlighten the House on that aspect when he rises to reply.

I refer to the boundaries specified on the map displayed in the Chamber. The map is uncertified by any authority, and illustrates the definition of the metropolitan area as contained in the legislation. No authority has been quoted as the originator

of these lines. I believe members of my party and the people of Western Australia are justified in assuming that these boundaries are the brainchild of the Liberal Party itself and it is as a further consequence of that that there is justification in saying the legislation is a Liberal Party gerrymander.

The Electoral Districts Act lays down that certain things should be considered when drawing electoral boundaries. It specifies community of interest, means of communication, the distance from the capital, physical features and the existing boundaries of districts. If we place those tests on the boundaries drawn by the Liberal Party to represent the metropolitan area as defined in this Bill, we find the legislation fails most miserably in terms of those criteria.

For instance, the towns of Kwinana and Callista in the lower portion of the South Metropolitan Province are as far from the central business district of Perth as the town of Wanneroo, yet we find that the new boundary has been drawn just south of the town of Wanneroo. Anybody who knows Wanneroo will accept that it is very much a metropolitan town; it is suburbia itself, and the people who live there work within the metropolitan area, commuting backwards and forwards each day. One has only to travel along Wanneroo Road to understand what I am saying; they will observe the numbers who travel up and down Wanneroo Road from that part of the metropolitan area.

If we were basing our judgment on where an enlarged metropolitan area boundary should be placed, surely we would place it north of the Wanneroo townsite. However, I believe an examination of the figures returned at the last State election for that province will reveal the reasons Wanneroo has been deliberately left out of the metropolitan area as defined by this Bill, and other areas have been placed within the metropolitan area.

I should like to quote some figures relating to the Toodyay district in order to illustrate my point. The Wanneroo polling booth returned the following figure at the last State election: Mr Jamieson (ALP) 679 votes; Mr Masters (Liberal) 733 votes; National Alliance 211 votes. I should think Mr Masters would very much want to retain that area within his province.

Just below the Wanneroo townsite is the area of Kallaroo; there, the figures are evenly balanced. Mr Jamieson received 560 votes, Mr Masters, 526 votes, and the National Alliance candidate, 161 votes. As one-third of the National Alliance votes went to the Labor Party candidate, the voting in that area was almost equal between the two major candidates.

In the Craigie area, 294 votes were cast for Mr Jamieson as against 135 votes for Mr Masters. In the State Housing Commission area of Girrawheen, voting at the Blackmore Primary School was 435 votes for Mr Jamieson and only 193 votes for Mr Masters. Obviously, with those sort of figures, Mr Masters would be very grateful to lose that particular portion of his province.

In all, electors in the Toodyay area gave 5 846 votes to Mr Jamieson and 4 941 votes to Mr Masters. We must remember that outside the new suburban subdivisions and in the more rural towns the voting was much more in favour of the Liberal Party and National Alliance candidates, and Mr Masters was returned.

While there were other considerations such as community of interest, communication, physical features and existing boundaries of districts, all the areas I have mentioned are a part of the Shire of Wanneroo. While those criteria would indicate that the Wanneroo townsite should have been included in the enlarged metropolitan area, it is being deliberately excluded, and there can be no other logic behind its exclusion than that the electors of the Wanneroo townsite favour the Liberal Party. In the main, the other areas do not favour the Liberal Party.

The story is much the same elsewhere. I believe one of the most important remarks made during the debate was made by Mr Masters himself.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Most of the important things that have been said in this debate tonight have been said by Mr Masters!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I want to refer to one of those remarks. The district of Forrestfield has now been included in the metropolitan area. If one drives through Forrestfield one will see that it is a rural district with a pleasant rural atmosphere. The reason for its inclusion in the metropolitan area is that there is a proposal to develop it for urban purposes, but we do not know when that development will take place.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It has already started.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We do not know when it will be completed. I would have thought there would be greater logic to base the drawing of the line there on what development exists at the moment in that district.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That is short-sighted.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Mr Withers has talked about the whole State being a large urban mass. I cannot agree with him, but I can conceive of areas in close proximity to the metropolitan area which are now being developed being included. To get back to the position in

Forrestfield, the line has been drawn there not because of what exists now but what might exist there.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: What will exist there, and not what might exist there.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is an assumption the honourable member is making.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Some 650 acres are being developed and within a few short years there will be 10 000 people living there.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If contractors have signed up to build those homes we might agree, but the development does not exist at the present time. It has been planned or proposed. The reason it has been included in the metropolitan area arises from the development in that locality by the State Housing Commission.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: A very small part of it is being developed by the State Housing Commission.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I wonder how much land the commission owns there?

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It would not be 20 per cent.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We might agree that is a good reason for Forrestfield being included in the metropolitan area. However, I should point out there is urban development in Kalamunda, but that district has been excluded from the metropolitan area. Kalamunda is an urban development, and the people living there commute to the city each day. There is no question about the community of interest with the people of the city. The focal point of Kalamunda is Perth, and the people living there work in Perth. There is no problem with postal services, telephone, and means of transport. They are all directed to the city.

By all the criteria that have been laid down one would expect the urban development in Kalamunda to be included in the metropolitan area, but under the proposals of the Bill it is not. The reason is that this does not suit the Liberal Party.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Do you realise how much of the land at Kalamunda it is possible to develop and how much cannot be developed?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The point is that it has been developed for urban residential purposes.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: The maximum amount is 14 per cent of the area.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The reason is that the land is uphill and downhill, and also rocky.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It also comprises forestry land.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If we talk about physical features and a natural boundary, which the honourable member

has mentioned, why not use the boundary of the John Forrest National Park as part of the metropolitan boundary?

The Hon. G. E. Masters: The escarpment is a natural boundary, but the rest is rural land. It suggests you do not know what you are talking about.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The metropolitan boundary is drawn a few kilometres from the boundary of the John Forrest National Park. One wonders why the latter boundary has not been used. No urban development can take place in that national park, and if we refer to the map that has been displayed in the Chamber we find the developed urban roads marked in the area west of the park boundary. In that particular instance the criteria would seem to demand that the boundary of the John Forrest National Park be used as a part of the boundary of the metropolitan area. I suggest this has not been done, because it does not suit the Liberal Party.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: What about Mundaring?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If the whole purpose of this change is to embrace the people who quite demonstrably are living within an extension of the metropolitan area, we should include the people living in Mundaring, Kalamunda, and Armadale-Kelmscott. None of these areas has been included.

Reference has been made to the railway line at Armadale being used as a boundary. On the west side of that railway line the State Housing Commission has purchased land, which will be developing a housing estate. Of course that would not favour the sitting member, whereas development on the eastern side of the line would favour him.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: The commission owns more land south of the line than it owns north of the line. It seems you have not done your homework.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Mr Masters seems to be in conflict with the honourable member, because he claims that the Forrestfield district can be justifiably included in the metropolitan area because it will be developed for housing. If what Mr Pratt is saying is correct then the Liberal Party should have moved the new metropolitan boundary further south of Armadale to include the State Housing Commission area.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: That is your assertion.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The honourable member seems to be contesting what Mr Masters has said.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: That is because you are not telling the truth.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There is as much logic in what Mr Masters has said as in what the honourable member has said. The honourable member will have every opportunity to get onto his feet

and take part in this debate. All he can do is to interject in trying to present an argument.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Do you object to being kept honest?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There is no rhyme or reason, and there is no logic, to this Liberal Party gerrymander.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are only guessing. You have not done your homework.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Mr Masters does not even know who drew the boundary, and he is a member of the Government which introduced the Bill.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: What grounds were put forward by the Minister in the second reading speech to justify this?

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: There was no mention in the Minister's speech about State Housing Commission development. I am telling you the majority of the land the commission owns is outside the new metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: No attempt was made by the Minister in his speech to justify the line being placed where it is. No authority has been given to the Government for the drawing of this boundary. I can understand the great desire on the part of Mr Pratt to interject—

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: I do this to keep you honest.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If I were a member of the Government which brought this Bill forward I would feel as uncomfortable as the honourable member.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: You should be uncomfortable for what you are saying. From what you are saying you do not know what you are talking about.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The honourable member has a conscience and is able to feel uncomfortable. However, I am not quite sure about the other member who has been interjecting.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Speaking the truth does not make me uncomfortable. Does it worry you?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Perhaps when I resume my seat the honourable member will rise to his feet and tell us the truth about the origin of the new boundary, the community of interest, the means of communication, the distance from the capital and the reason the existing metropolitan boundary has been ignored by the Liberal Party.

The Bill proposes to increase the number of metropolitan seats to 27, and the number of agricultural seats is to remain at 24. If we look at the figures supplied by the Bureau of Census and Statistics we find that while the population of the metropolitan area is increasing, the population

in the rural areas is decreasing steadily. I shall not read out the lengthy list of figures. I have obtained them from the bureau, and I have a copy which is available to any member who wishes to peruse them. What I have said is a historical trend, and the population figures in the rural areas have been falling, compared with the increase in population in the metropolitan area and the provincial towns.

If the existing formula in the Electoral Districts Act continues to be applied—that is, two metropolitan votes equal one rural vote—the number of rural seats should be reduced; but that would not suit the Liberal Party or the Country Party. There was a further problem, and that was the growth around the metropolitan area in the fringe suburbs. Obviously this will affect the number of electors in the rural seats. It will mean that a greater number of voters will have to be included in each rural seat, and this will increase the size of the areas where the population is declining.

Of course they could not tolerate that situation and it was necessary that this change be made. Incredibly, the Premier had said the Labor Party would find it difficult to oppose this legislation. In a funny kind of way, the existing Act does in fact take note of the population, because two metropolitan voters are equal to one rural voter; so the people matter when we are fixing quotas. But in the change proposed in this Bill the people suddenly do not matter. The number of metropolitan seats is to be fixed, whereas in the existing Act it could vary. Metropolitan seats are to be fixed at 27 and rural seats at 24, which puts them on the basis that has always existed for Legislative Council seats. In the Legislative Council we have had five metropolitan provinces, two mining and pastoral provinces, and eight agricultural provinces. So the Government has now fixed the number of metropolitan Assembly seats as against country seats.

The number of seats for the Legislative Assembly is now fixed at 27 metropolitan, 24 agricultural, and four in the north. That is the way the Government has decided it will be done, and people no longer matter. It is area that matters from now on. If we take that as the basis of an argument—I suppose the Liberal Party must have its own peculiar logic in dealing with these things—we have roughly equal representation in the Assembly between the metropolitan area and the country; that is, 27 metropolitan seats and 28 seats in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area.

I do not think the Minister would say he is being unreasonable in bringing this proposition to us. I do not think Mr Lewis would say he is being unreasonable—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: When you sit down you will hear what Mr Lewis has to say.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON:—and I do not think Mr Pratt would say he is being unreasonable in supporting this proposition. So if it is reasonable that there be almost equality between the metropolitan and country seats in the Legislative Assembly, why can we not have at least the same reasonableness in dealing with the Legislative Council? But do we have that? No. The change for the Legislative Council is an extra province in the city, which gives us two additional members; so we will have 12 metropolitan members as against 20 members for the other provinces, which is nowhere near the equality which is thought to be reasonable for the Legislative Assembly.

We know precisely why this is being done and why, in all the years the Liberal and Country Parties have had the opportunity to change this legislation, that situation has continued since the legislation was first brought into existence in this State. The Labor Party has never had the opportunity to change the legislation because it has never had the numbers in this House to permit it to do so.

It is not a question of democracy. It is a question of power. It is what the Liberal and Country Parties want. Be damned to the people; it is power they want and power they intend to keep. On occasions they will lose the majority in the Legislative Assembly. But so what? Whatever happens there, they have the control in the Legislative Council. We can argue as much as we like about what happens in the Legislative Assembly. We can ask until we are blue in the face who drew up the boundaries. It does not matter to the Government parties because it is here in this Chamber that the Conservative parties maintain their power. It is time this situation was altered and it is time the people became much more aware of the role this House plays in the politics of this State.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [10.07 p.m.]: Mr Deputy President, I have been listening to probably the most unreasoned argument from the other side of the House, without factual backing, that I have ever heard since I have been in this Chamber. When I first saw the Bill I was very tempted to make a few amendments of my own, and I will outline some of them to the House at a later date. The misconceptions and misstatements of fact which came from the other side of the House should, I think, be corrected.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott talked about the terrific amount of travelling by Federal members. I would think there were quite a number of members of this House who spend a greater number of hours in travelling than the majority of Federal members do. The only Federal members who have any real travelling to do are those who live in the country and represent country

electorates. In the main, the city members of Federal Parliament can get back to their electorates quicker than members of this Chamber can.

Mr Dans, in his usual very pleasant manner, gave us a diatribe about putting power before people. This power syndrome seems to have got him a little lately. What he does not appear to realise is that there are people in country areas—people who like to be represented just as people in the metropolitan area do. I believe, because of distance and lack of communication, they should have the same chance to be represented as people living in the metropolitan area.

I sometimes believe members of the Opposition do not realise there are things called manual telephone exchanges and that some people in the country do not even have telephones. Under the present Federal Government they never will have telephones because costs have increased so much and the restrictions have become more and more onerous every year.

The Hon. R. Thompson: If the Liberal and Country Parties got into Government in Canberra would they reduce the telephone charges?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I was not talking specifically about telephone charges. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition—who shows a lamentable lack of rural knowledge every time he gets to his feet—I will explain that in order to have a telephone connected to a country property one must have a line, and I was referring to the charges for those lines.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It is elementary.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I quite agree, and I wish Mr Dellar could get it through to the powers that be in his party, the leader of his party, the Postmaster-General, and the member sitting next to him that those lines are the important things, and the increase in the cost of putting those lines in has made it almost prohibitive for people in the country to have telephones.

It is obvious that members of the Opposition are in confusion. The leader and the deputy leader are fighting, and no two speakers from the other side of the House tell the same story. The Leader of the Opposition wanted to talk about who drew the line. Whoever drew the line, when I look at the map the line looks very clear to me. I do not think it matters two hoots who drew the line. It is where the line is that matters, and I think the line is where it should be according to any normal, sensible reaction of people.

The Hon. R. Thompson: "Reactionary", that is the word.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Again, the Leader of the Opposition cannot even listen properly. If he reads *Hansard* next week he will find the word I used.

Mr Claughton spoke about areas and that big rural area of Forrestfield. In all innocence, I do not regard Forrestfield as being a rural area. If it is a rural area I have been sadly misled in my definition of "rural".

The Hon. R. Thompson: Do you understand what the word "rural" means?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I think I do.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us what it means.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Leader of the Opposition can look up the dictionary for himself; but I forget, he cannot read.

Despite the magnificent increase in percentages for seats in the metropolitan area, Mr Claughton keeps on saying we do not believe that people matter. What we do believe is that people do matter. But Mr Claughton is quite prepared to wipe off those people in rural areas because he does not represent them. Funnily enough, all Opposition members have virtually been talking as though they were drawing the lines. The lines are beautifully drawn and the major line is clearly defined.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us who drew the lines.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is amazing for a member of a party which talks about people being represented to talk as Mr Cooley did of drawing equal squares all over the State from the South Australian border to the coast. How ridiculous! What will he put in the great desert?

The Hon. R. Thompson: You believe in rigged boundaries, do you?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Did anybody say anything about rigged boundaries? I believe in people being represented. The trouble with the Leader of the Opposition is that his mind is warped and he does not want to give people a fair say. He wants to put the boundary where it suits him. He is not interested in people or in giving people a fair go and an equal chance of getting to their representative. In no way is he interested in that.

I will use one of Mr Claughton's expressions—I do not like it very much because it sounds a little blasphemous—and state that the Leader of the Opposition virtually says, "Be damned to the people, political power is what we want and we will draw the map the way we want it instead of drawing it in a reasonable, rational way." I have mentioned the percentage increase, and obviously Mr Claughton has not done his homework because the Legislative Council is to have a greater percentage increase in seats than the Legislative Assembly is to have.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is not so. They are both 4 per cent.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: We have one seat more.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Later on I will lend Miss Elliott my computer. I have worked out the increase.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: What is it then?

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Don't tell me you have to use a computer.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes I do, because it is beyond my capacity for mental arithmetic. If Miss Elliott comes to me a little later I will obtain a blackboard and explain it to her because I think that would be the only way she would understand it.

I come now to my own ideas which are far more important than the same arguments presented by the Opposition. I believe the people who deserve a vote are the people who produce something. I agree with the line that has been drawn, but I think within it we should have possibly one Legislative Council seat and four Assembly seats, because the bulk of the production of this State comes from outside that line. I considered going into great depth with this argument for the benefit of members opposite, but I thought, "Look Lewis, you are getting nearly as silly as the Opposition in respect of one-vote-one-value."

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: You could never get as silly as that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No. I gave up that argument. It is just as sane an argument as that which members opposite have been using. Why not give the votes to the people who produce the wealth of the State? The wealth of the State is not produced within the clearly defined line depicted on the map. I suggest to the Minister in future redistributions he considers the prospect of giving voters in the metropolitan area voting value for what they produce, and giving rural areas voting value for what they produce. I think then we would have a first-class House here. I think under that arrangement the Deputy Leader of the Opposition may just retain his seat, but he would be about the only member opposite left. He might have to change parties.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: No way in the world.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The argument is the same as that used by the Labor Party in respect of one-vote-one-value. The Leader of the Opposition as usual quoted the United Nations, but when the Hon. Gordon Masters quoted international figures in respect of one-vote-one-value the Opposition did not want too much of that because it was too thought-straining. The fact that the United States—that horrible power, so the socialists say—might have 15 or 20 votes more than Australia does not fit in with the argument of members opposite.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: It is not an argument.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That is dead right. Mr Claughton has put his finger on it again. There is no argument; he has no argument, and the Opposition has had no argument all night.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: An awful lot of streets.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You could meet most of them by attending the supermarket.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: There are 70 000 people.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I believe the proposition we put up from this side of the House would be fair and just and would give to the State what we are seeking. It is part of our policy of a unicameral system of government in Western Australia.

If our suggestions were accepted they would remove a large number of the anomalies referred to here tonight, and I believe they would help do away with the possibility of one-party rule.

We have seen it demonstrated in the Federal sphere that with equal representation there is not the possibility of a single party being in Government at all times.

There is no reason at all why the country people should be favoured, in these times, in respect of the number of people they elect to Parliament. The present system is a continuation of inequitable representation, and it is contrary to the practice of democratic parliamentary procedure. It gives one section of the community an advantage, which is not required at all in the present-day mode of living.

I hope members opposite will give some regard to what we on this side have had to say, because I believe the policy we have propounded in this place, as it relates to electoral reform, does at least keep the matter of democratic parliamentary procedure alive. On those grounds I support the Bill.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Mr Cooley says he is going to support the Bill.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I mean I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan) [8.56 p.m.]: So there will be no doubt as to where I stand, I will say at the outset that I oppose the Bill.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are having an argument with Mr Cooley.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Let me commence my remarks by quoting to the House an extract from a discussion by Mr Kim Beazley on the 17th August, 1973, to the Perth Press Club. This may answer some of the observations made by Mr Gordon Masters. Mr Beazley said, and I quote—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Have you realised the need to mount an expedition to rescue New Zealand from tyranny?

(i) They have no Upper House—
an essential safeguard for liberty.

(ii) They have no federal constitution—a frightening concentration of power is vested in one government.

(iii) They have electoral districts of equal enrolment. Property can only be safeguarded by weighing various interests, and they make the hideous error of treating people as people.

(iv) They have no High Court engaged in interpreting their Constitution to tell them they can't do it.

In a nutshell that seems to be what we are talking about tonight.

The Hon. J. Heitman: It is not.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Before I commence what I am about to say, I would indicate we are living, in this country today, in very momentous times. Conventions are being broken; the people are becoming disappointed in Governments; in fact, from my own personal observation, there is a feeling of rot and decay in the air. This is my observation, and I really believe that the debacle that is taking place in the Federal sphere is certainly shaking the people's faith in the system under which we operate.

If the people do not take note of that, then what would follow would be hard to comprehend; and I would not like to comprehend it. The Parliamentary democracy under which we operate has taken some 600 years to evolve. It has been carried around the world and, by and large, it has served the people well.

It exists in many forms. Democratic ideals should not be set aside merely to maintain a particular party in power; because once this is done we destroy those ideals which have taken 600 years to evolve.

This country is no different from other countries in the world which have similar systems of government; which systems, if we read the papers we will see, are not only falling down, but are being broken down; and before they finish there will be slaughter and bloodshed in certain parts of the world.

I do not suggest that will happen here, but because our Governments do not, by and large, measure up to their responsibilities, there are more and more decisions being made outside of Parliament; and these will continue to be made outside of Parliament.

It is unfortunate that conservative opposition parties have a history of departing from the democratic principles about which I have spoken. There could have been an argument some years ago and, indeed, there was a very good argument supported on many occasions by our own members in this place and in another place. However, I think some of those reasons have now passed and with modern communication, and fast modern travel

I support the Bill because it is a sensible piece of legislation. We have not had one iota of constructive criticism from the Opposition. Members opposite have stated their dogma and have continued all night on the one-vote-one-value theme. Obviously they have no criticism of the Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Would you like a bag of bananas or a bag of peanuts?

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [10.20 p.m.]: The night is drawing on, and I have only a few minutes in which to make the few points that have come through to me during the course of the debate. First of all, I think there is one prime feature we must bear in mind in respect of this Bill: that we do have in Australia a Federal system of Government.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: You are not going to blame the Federal Government for drawing that line?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: It is amazing how some minds work. The Federal system rejects the concept of one-vote-one-value. This is the universal theme of federations in other countries throughout the world, and it is no exception for us to reject that concept in Western Australia.

It has been ably pointed out by Mr Masters that Western Australia, because it has a relatively small population—something like 8 per cent of the population of Australia—and a large land mass as compared with other States, has some special problems.

It is very interesting that the Opposition should take the line of one-vote-one-value in this year of 1975, because that has not been the case in a number of years in this Parliament. Very quickly I will quote a few interesting little excerpts from *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I thought I told you we are now living in 1975 and not in 1947.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I accept that statement.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Progress is being made in Western Australia, from time to time under a Liberal Government.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am not suggesting that there should not be progress; I am merely pointing out the change of tack in which the Labor Party is indulging.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you say you can't have one-vote-one-value under a Federal system?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: One does not have that right across the board under a Federal system.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Where don't you have it?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The House of Representatives does not comply with that principle.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What seats are out of balance?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I intend to make my points.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You made the statement, now you qualify it.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I will qualify it. I will say this: I am about to quote from page 3418 of the 1954 *Hansard*. In answer to an interjection by Mr Perkins, as follows—

Does not the Labour Party provide for one vote one value?

Mr McCulloch said—

I have never heard of it. Does the honourable member believe in that?

Mr Perkins replied, "No". That was in 1954, and that comment was made by a Labor member, Mr McCulloch.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: It didn't suit them then.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: That is right. It is also interesting to read what Mr Bickerton said. This is recorded in *Hansard* of 1962.

Points of Order

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr Deputy President, the honourable member cannot quote from a debate that took place in another House.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: This is not the same debate.

The Hon. N. McNeill: There is no point of order.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: This is not the same Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Our members have been stopped on that one. We have to be consistent on this.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: This is not referring to the debate on this Bill in another Chamber.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: On a point of order, Sir, I thought you were in the process of giving a ruling on the point of order raised by Mr Thompson.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I rule that he may continue to speak.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: With due deference to you, Sir, I did not hear you give a ruling. If that is the case, I will withdraw my point of order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The honourable Mr Ferry may proceed.

Debate Resumed

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Thank you, Sir. At page 123 of the 1962 *Hansard* when the then member for Pilbara (Mr Bickerton) was speaking in the Address-in-Reply debate—

The Hon. R. Thompson: We were still flying DC3's around Western Australia then.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I think the Leader of the Opposition is flying kites now. Mr Bickerton had this to say—

This State solved the problem of adequate representation for the North-West by ensuring that, regardless of the population figures, we maintain three seats in the North-West which, in area, approximates half the size of the State of Western Australia.

He went on to say—

It is just too stupid for anyone to imagine that one member could adequately represent the people living in that huge area. As we know, it is a case of "the squeaky wheel gets the most grease".

He went on further to say—

... I think those areas will always suffer until such time as steps are taken to even up the representation in the Commonwealth Parliament by reducing the number of members representing the over-populated areas and increasing the number of members who will represent the under-populated areas, on some form of area-population basis.

He was speaking there about the electorates under the Commonwealth system. Surely the same principle must be applied to the State electorates. It is rather interesting that the Labor Party today chooses to adopt a completely different tack when it feels it is in its own interests to do so. That was not the case when Mr Bickerton spoke in 1962.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why don't you put through an Act to keep you in power forever? There is nothing to stop you doing that. The only State that can't do it is New South Wales.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I will now quote from *Hansard* of 1963, and I would like to quote a passage spoken by a very respected member of this House, the late Hon. H. C. Strickland. During the course of his comments on this subject—and this can be found at page 3100 of the 1963 *Hansard*—Mr Strickland said—

The Minister in his remarks stated that the north-west is getting fair representation. It is fair; I am not disputing that. However, I think that voices lost in the wide open spaces could be tragic. There has been some great progress in the north-west through the vigour of the representatives of the north during the past 10 or 12 years . . .

A little further on he went on to say—

Where there are six members in the Legislative Council representing that area today, there will be four. They will be representing the most remote and most sparsely populated area of the State, and I say it is rather tragic.

That Labor member was deploring the fact that people in remote areas were losing some measure of representation by the loss of seats in favour of the metropolitan area. That is contrary to the line adopted by the Opposition tonight.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Don't you understand that in those days north-west members had to board a State ship or drive to visit their electorates? You are living in the past.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am not concerned about the interjections of members opposite.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: At least he has proved he can read.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The interjections are very complimentary, but they do not put me off one little bit. I would like to quote now from page 1498 of the 1965 *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is your problem: you live in the past all the time.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: Mr Jamieson, then the member for Beeloo, had this to say—

The argument has always been, of course, that in a rural State the rural areas should have some special privileges allocated to them, as do the people in the goldfields areas and remote areas such as the north-west. People in those districts have had privileges accorded to them in regard to voting rights.

Even Mr Jamieson agreed in 1965 that the principle had some merit. I am aware I am going back a little, and that this will irk some members opposite.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The main thing they are crooked about is that they can't find out who drew the line.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I quote now from volume 3 of the 1959 *Parliamentary Debates* at page 2640. This passage is attributed to the Hon. J. T. Tonkin and he had this to say—

True democracy aims at the principle of one vote one value. I admit that in a State like Western Australia we cannot adhere strictly to that principle; because we must take into consideration distances and the remoteness of the voter from the centre of government; . . .

That was a statement made by the Hon. J. T. Tonkin in 1959. It seems passing strange that the Labor Party, in 1975, has come out so strongly against the principles it espoused in 1959. Its principles have gone overboard somewhat.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Seeing you know so much about history, when were members of Parliament granted air fares to fly into their electorates? This hinges on the argument and we have put forward one side of the argument.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The members of the Opposition are bringing in all these side issues which have no bearing on the legislation or on the principle espoused. Of course we do have special problems in Western Australia, because this State represents almost half of the Australian continent. Therefore compensation has to be made. I would be horrified if the day were ever reached when we saw this principle being thrown overboard, because in a State such as Western Australia we cannot have good representation on a purist theory of one-vote-one-value. It is just not on. As the hour is late I have no desire to prolong the debate, and I support the Bill.

THE HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [10.32 p.m.]: The proposed alteration to the metropolitan boundary seeks to enlarge the metropolitan area for the purpose of allowing members of Parliament to cope with the increasing population and the expected increase in population within a very short period in areas such as those mentioned by Mr Gordon Masters and in the Armadale-Kelmscott area. The Bill seeks to do this and, at the same time, it seeks to give more metropolitan representation and, proportionately, it seeks to decrease the country representation.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: It does not.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: It does. This is something which, obviously, members of the Opposition are unable to understand. If they did they could arrive at the answer themselves with the use of a little arithmetic. If members of the Opposition had a valid argument against this Bill they would be able to present it with the idea of convincing the people.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: We have done that.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: I refer briefly to a couple of occasions this evening when members of the Opposition have not told the truth in relation to parts of my province. I will be pleased to hear them rebut my statement that they have not told the truth so that it may be placed on record.

Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about a railway line running through Armadale.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is true.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: He referred to people on one side of the line having one vote and to people on the other side of the line having two votes, and I had cause to bring him back to reality.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You did not bring anybody back to reality.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is trying to reassert, by his interjection, that what he said was true; that is, that people on one side of the line had one vote, and people on the other side of the line had two votes.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Had the equivalent of two votes; a two to one value, and you know it.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: When I had cause to interject the Leader of the Opposition altered his statement to that which he has just made; that is, the value of voting. This is a misconception that has been used a number of times in regard to that area. It has been said that people on one side of the line have one vote and people on the other side of the line have two votes.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It is the same thing.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: It is vastly different.

The Hon. R. Thompson: If 6 000 electors on one side of the line elect a member of Parliament and 13 000 on the other side elect a member of Parliament it is the same thing.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: If we consider the individual in the electorate we find that each person on both sides of the railway line has an equal vote. He has only one vote. The Opposition has been endeavouring to create the impression that some people will have two ballot papers. If they live on one side of the line they will have only one ballot paper, but if they live on the other side they will have two. If members of the Opposition have a valid argument they do not need to create a wrong impression.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You will not be there for long if you tell them that.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: I will take every opportunity I can to tell the people in my province that people on either side of the railway line will have one vote.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But not one value for one vote.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: The Leader of the Opposition does not seem to get away from the idea of two votes. He is going round and round in circles like a dog chasing its tail. I have established that each individual will have one vote and not two votes.

I now wish to deal with a statement made by Mr Cloughton when he said that at Forrestfield the State Housing Commission areas were being placed inside the metropolitan area. He then went on to mention the boundary line which will pass through what is now known as the Dale electorate and again suggested that the boundary line was being drawn in such a way as to keep State Housing Commission homes within the metropolitan area boundary, so that the votes made in those areas would not affect the votes outside the boundary.

Mr Cloughton also referred to State Housing Commission land holdings. I then had cause to bring him back to reality by telling him what he obviously did not

know; namely that the majority of the land held by the State Housing Commission would be outside the metropolitan area. Unfortunately he was not willing to admit he was wrong in making that statement. In fact, the area which will probably be the next to be developed within the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott comprises mainly private holdings. In that area there is only a small section of State Housing Commission land. The bulk of the holdings are outside that area. Admittedly it will not be developed in the near future, but it will be at some time in the future.

I object strongly to members of the Opposition telling untruths and trying to create the impression that there is some social discrimination by having that boundary pass through my province because it is just not so. I think that if members of the Opposition have a good valid argument they do not need to stoop to telling untruths.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [10.36 p.m.]: Let me say at the outset that I am opposed to this Bill in its entirety and I support the comments made by members of the Opposition. I do not really care whether they are acceptable to those Government members who have spoken to the debate.

For the record I support the principle of one-vote-one-value.

The Hon. J. Heitman: You would have to do that.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I am now telling members opposite that I do. Let us return to the Bill.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Not a bad idea.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: This evening we have heard a great deal about one-vote-one-value and perhaps members of the Opposition have been a little out of order in talking about one-vote-one-value all night, but it is their prerogative to do that in putting forward their ideas.

Turning away from the situation of incorporating the principle of one-vote-one-value in the electoral system I will now do what Mr Ferry did and go back in history to 1947 when the Electoral Districts Act was first placed on the Statute book and when, at that time, the boundaries of the metropolitan area were defined. I am sure the Minister will correct me if I am wrong when I say that the boundaries at that time were set by the Electoral Commissioners.

Our basic objection to the Bill—if we forget about espousing the principle of one-vote-one-value—is that the Government of Western Australia at this time has seen fit, regardless of the fact that since 1947 an independent body of Electoral Commissioners has set the boundaries of the metropolitan area, to introduce this Bill.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I do not think that is quite right.

The Hon. J. Heitman: You are straying from the truth.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I did invite the Minister to correct me at the time in making that statement. I was not speaking to Mr Heitman because it is a wonder that he can hear me. If I am wrong the Minister can correct me. However I understood that that was the situation. If that were not the case in 1947, it was the case in later years.

The Hon. J. Heitman: The boundaries will be set by the Boundaries Commission on this occasion.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I understand an alteration was made to the boundaries due to an engineering problem met by the Main Roads Department. At that time a minor amendment was made to the existing boundaries. However, it does not matter. Since the boundaries were set by an independent body of Electoral Commissioners, in the short period of 18 months the present Government has been in office it has found it necessary to redefine the metropolitan area boundaries. However this has not been done by an independent body of Electoral Commissioners. It has been done by some single body.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: How do you know?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: If the boundaries had been set by a group of people this may have been done by 12 members of the Court Government, or if it were done by a sub-committee it would have been done by three or four of the Ministers. Of course, if Mr Lewis had his way he would set the boundaries by himself and get rid of all metropolitan members because, in his view, they do not produce anything. He was going to leave the metropolitan area with five members. That would be all right for the people in the country, and I am sure Mr Griffiths would not mind being shifted.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I would be one of the five left to represent the metropolitan area.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Is that so? Of course, we would hate to lose the honourable member. I return to the questions my leader asked when he opened the debate from this side of the House. I would not have to remind you, Mr President, that if this Bill had been introduced during the period the Tonkin Government was in office there would have been a great outcry. This would have applied particularly in this Chamber. I entered Parliament in 1971 when there was a change of Government. Since that time we have seen new members enter this Chamber and have seen others leave. However I am sure that if the Tonkin Government had introduced this Bill into this Chamber, supported by

a map hanging on the wall which is not even dated and does not bear any signature, and is not incorporated in the schedule to the Bill, I know how far that Government would have got. Even if it had tabled the map on the Table of the House there would have been a great deal of opposition to it.

All the Opposition members in this House at that time would have been asking, "Who drew that map? Who drew that boundary line? Who certified it? Does it agree with the schedule to the Bill?"

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Who would have told us?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: We would not have had to tell the honourable member or any other member on the other side of the House because a map of the proposed redistribution of boundaries would have been tabled as we would have been fully aware that we would not have got away with a Bill such as the one before us now. This is tantamount to a gerrymander or a "Charlemander", and the members of the Government are showing their contempt of this Parliament when they are prepared to place on the wall of this Chamber a map such as we see now which depicts the alteration that is to be made to the electoral boundaries of this State and which waives the right of Electoral Commissioners to define the boundaries of the metropolitan area.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Who said they had the right?

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: If they did not have the right then they certainly do not have it now. The Government has made sure of that. All they have the right to do now is to chop that up.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is the right they have now.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: But not outside that boundary.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: As I have said, if we had tried to do that, I know what we would have been accused of. If the Government is as honest and open as it claims in its book, the pages of which are not numbered, the Minister could have indicated that the boundary defined on the map was done by Cabinet, the Premier, or the Premier in conjunction with other interested bodies. If the Minister had done this, he might not have received so much objection. But while the situation remains, and the Opposition does not know who drew the line on the map, we will continue to object. The members of the Government in this Chamber do not know.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I think that is a wild statement.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Maybe it is wild. If Mr Clive Griffiths knows, will he tell me afterwards? I promise to keep the information confidential. If Mr Clive Griffiths does not know and members of his party do not know, we certainly do not know, and it looks as though we will never know.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You have been told.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: We have been told that the Minister for Justice will take the responsibility for it. Whether that means he will roll the map up and take it home so that it does not get pinched, I do not know but that does not take much responsibility.

We heard Mr Lewis talk about the fact that we drew lines. He waffled on in his usual way. He used words which I cannot remember because they are hardly worth remembering. We were given a diatribe on termites and were told that our argument was nonsensical. It is certainly not as nonsensical as the comments made by the honourable member before he concluded his speech.

In his usual helpful way Mr Clive Griffiths came to the fore as recently as a few minutes ago and asked who drew the line on the map.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I didn't ask that.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: By interjection the honourable member did. I could not tell him, and I still cannot.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He is anxious to find out.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I know. At this late stage we do not want to delay the debate any longer. We will not be told.

The situation regarding representation in the north is pretty well known. There is only one member in the Lower North Province on our side, but there are three other members of Parliament in the area. However, even if we reach the stage where only I represented the area I am sure I could do the job as I am doing it now.

The aspect of travel to the north was raised. When I was elected to Parliament in 1971—and Mr Berry will correct me if I am wrong—I was entitled to four return air flights a year to Perth. I happen to live in my electorate at Exmouth which is only 840 miles up the road from Midland. Shortly after I was elected that privilege was extended by the Tonkin Government. Perhaps in this instance that Government made a blunder in not restricting the privilege just to me. However, it saw fit to extend it to all north-west members so that now we enjoy unlimited air travel to, from, and within our electorates, as, of course, we should. It astounds me that the Brand Government could not see the folly of its ways and did not extend this privilege to its members before that. However, the reason is obvious; that is, that Government did not have as many members up there then as it has now. How long that situation will last I do not know.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It will change for the better.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: That is right. We will end up with all the Labor seats

back again, but members opposite would not really want to see me go.

I will close on this note: We are opposed to the legislation in every shape and form. No argument has been presented by any Government member as to why we should agree to it. No adequate explanation has been given to substantiate who in fact was responsible for it and who will change it in future. Perhaps such a change will not be long in coming when the astounding fact raised by Mr Pratt is realised; that is, that 800 State Housing blocks have been left on the wrong side of the railway line. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [10.51 p.m.]: I do not really know what the Opposition would want to know in addition to the information which has already been supplied to it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Who drew the boundary?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I will make some observations on the speeches made, particularly by members of the Opposition, and it is logical to start at the beginning.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you closing the debate?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am summarising the debate. I did not move the second reading.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Hopefully, yes.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am only asking a question.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Hopefully, no.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I would not be in a position to close the debate. However, as the Minister responsible for the legislation and in as much as no-one else rose to answer the call, I would believe that perhaps there were no other speakers.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are wrong.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I give the call to the member who rises to his feet first and on this occasion it was the Minister for Justice.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I hope that by that remark you are not suggesting I was casting any reflection, Mr President, because this was certainly not my intention.

Let me come back to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. I thought he was really trying very hard to do one thing, which was to last out until dinner time.

The Hon. R. Thompson: To extract information from you.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That was really his chief purpose; that is, to make it appear his speech really carried some weight. However, it did not. In the years I have been here we have heard some good, positive, and very critical speeches with some

substance, but none of those adjectives would apply to the speech we heard tonight from the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Answer those six questions I asked.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I would say that the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on this important piece of legislation was most disappointing. He certainly did ask a number of questions to which he wanted answers, but let me go a little further. The Leader of the Opposition, as well as a number of other members, endeavoured to find out who drew the line. For what real reason they wish to know I cannot understand, but I will return to that point in a moment. During his speech the Leader of the Opposition referred to a certain person by name and I said by way of interjection that I could not recall I knew a person of that name, and that still applies. The Leader of the Opposition described him as a vice-president of a branch of the Liberal Party.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I believe that the disparaging remarks the Leader of the Opposition made in respect of that person were quite unseemly, when, in fact, as the Minister in charge of this legislation I know that no person of that name had any part whatever in the preparation of the Bill, the legislation, or the drawing of the plan.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us who drew it? No-one will tell us, and you will not.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I say again it was most unseemly and inappropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to make such references to that person. He also made the observation that inasmuch as the commissioners had not been used for the purpose of drawing the boundaries, the Government was disparaging the commissioners. I think that was the word used.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Yes.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I rejected this by way of interjection and I do so again now. I ask the Leader of the Opposition when in fact, to his knowledge, the commissioners have ever been responsible for drawing that boundary for the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: They have never drawn a line yet; they have drawn up electorates.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: So the fact that the Government did not use the commissioners for the purpose of drawing a line around the metropolitan area is not in any way disparaging to them.

In a moment I will refer to the 1947 Act because references have been made to it and there ought to be some understanding of it. Before doing so I wish to say again that I am the responsible Minister. I did not physically draw the line, but I gave the instructions to officers.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Who to?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: They are officers in the Government departments and in the Government, and the responsibility for the instructions for the drawing of that line was mine and the Government's.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are responsible for the gerrymander.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition chooses to use the word "gerrymander". Once again I reject the comment. I just ask that the Leader of the Opposition and members of the House reflect on something else. They are critical of that line and it is the only thing of which they appear to be critical other than the fact that the legislation does not provide for one-vote-one-value, whatever that might mean in their terminology. They perhaps conveniently forget to ponder the alternative. What would have been the alternative? The Leader of the Opposition surely knows. I do not say he certainly knows, because obviously he does not. But he should know the Bill. The fact is, as he ought to know, that under the Act, before an automatic redistribution could take place there would be virtually two elections.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: So, in the circumstances which have been criticised time and time again, a number of seats would be out of balance. Let us consider the situation at Toodyay and what appears to be a disproportionate increase in the number of electors in that electorate as well as in others.

What would have happened if we had done nothing at this time, is that the number of seats out of balance now would have remained, and some of them are grossly out of balance. We would have gone to another election on present boundaries and had an automatic redrawing of boundaries by electoral commissioners, but on what basis? The Leader of the Opposition knows it would have been on the basis of the present metropolitan boundary. So there would have been a redistribution on that basis.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Not necessarily at all.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Something else would have occurred too; that is, a shift of seats out of the fringe metropolitan area, the near country, and deep in the country, into the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Has this ever been done previously by this method? Answer "Yes" or "No".

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not aware that it has. It is not the only thing new in this Bill at all. We are been accused of living in the past and not keeping up with present-day requirements, but when we genuinely and honestly try to bring things up to date and make adjustments

of representation, what do we get? The only real ploy the Opposition could lay its voice to is that the Bill does not give one-vote-one-value. That is all it can pick on.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is part of your platform.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Perhaps members did not appreciate the significance of what Mr Dellar said in his statement that he endorsed the principle, and supported the principle, of one-vote-one-value. I imagine that everybody in this House would support that as a principle.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But it has never been implemented.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I wonder whether Mr Dellar would appreciate the implementation of that principle in his country area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I should imagine he will vote for it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is a very different matter. Let me come back to the point of what the situation would have been if this legislation had not been introduced. The Leader of the Opposition, like other members, ought to know there are just a few actions available for bringing about a change. One is automatic, and the other is by a motion of the House and the introduction of legislation, which is what we are doing.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Or, a number of seats being out of balance

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is the automatic provision to which I have already referred. If that course had been followed the situation would not have been improved. We would have the same number of seats and the same number of members of Parliament. I make no apology—none whatever—for being very much a party to the provisions in this Bill for the preservation of 24 seats in the country areas. They ought to be maintained because their representation is absolutely necessary and vital. But, by the same token, let it not be overlooked that when the Opposition is so critical of the fact there is no one-vote-one-value it conveniently passes over the vital provision of clause 5. In this Bill we are espousing our principle by taking out the two-to-one provision.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: And making it worse.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I ought to ignore the comment from Mr Cooley because I am reminded of his comments about members representing electorates. He said that members did not go out to see the people, but that people went to see their members. What a gross lack of knowledge he has of the work of country members. Let him ask Mr Dellar, Mr Leeson, or Mr Stubbs how they go about their electoral work. They go out and

see their people and the only way they will stay in Parliament is by doing just that. The people in the areas represented by those members cannot physically or financially find it possible to visit their members. That is what happens. We know—and we believe—that is the case.

I represent an area close to the city, and I have previously represented a suburban territory of this State. I know that the situation in the metropolitan area can be very different from that in country areas and that people in the metropolitan area may well go to see their member of Parliament. As I say, Mr Cooley obviously has no appreciation of the situation which applies in country areas. It is basic to the fallacies he canvassed to us on this whole question of representation.

I have a great respect for Mr Dans and the speeches he makes in this House but I do suggest to members that they look carefully at Mr Dans's speech when it appears in *Hansard*. Perhaps they will then come to the same conclusion as I did; that it was really a song, if "song" is the right word.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Tune.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: No, not a tune. A tune suggests something bright and cheery. The speech was a morbid explanation; a pessimism.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am not a pessimist; I firmly believe what I said and history will prove me correct.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Mr Dans certainly made a speech which seemed to prophesy all sorts of dire events in the future; a reminder of constant danger. I think at one stage he even said, "a warning". He said we cannot have it the same as we have had it previously.

We do not subscribe to a policy of *laissez-faire*. But, my very word, there are a tremendous number of things in this life which can be preserved and which should be preserved and the reason they are not preserved is because people, for all sorts of reasons, want to change them.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not be so stupid.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not being stupid.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I want to preserve our way of life; the Government wants to destroy it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: All I can say is that if Mr Dans has any influence in his party when he goes to the extent of making such statements, he is going about preserving our way of life in a strange way. We have had these things for over 100 years. I know the Parliament of Westminster has no Constitution.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We have not broken down the Constitution in this country.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: We have a Constitution which happens to be a part of our heritage, as well as a legal entity. It is part of our background.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It leaves a whole lot to be desired.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The longer we can preserve what we have the better it will be.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I agree, but the Government is not going about it in the right way.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Mr Dans should relate his thoughts to this Bill, and the measures we are using to implement it. That would be conducive to some of the events about which he expresses some concern. I express my views on what Mr Dans has said and say that it is absolute nonsense.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Let history be the judge.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I will be content to allow history to be the judge; very content indeed. This Bill is in response to the situation which, I say again, has been the subject of so much comment by so many people, particularly members of the Opposition. Mr Dans made the observation that the Premier had made a statement.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Two statements.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I think it was early last year that the Premier said, in answer to a question, that he had no intention of a redistribution or of introducing an electoral Bill. Of course, what Mr Dans said was not quite correct. In fact, I will verify that there was no proposal before the Government and there was nothing under consideration when Mr J. T. Tonkin first raised the question and claimed that the Government was considering a redistribution. The statement and the observation were completely and absolutely, and correctly, denied by the Premier.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: But I agreed with that and said he changed his mind after a survey.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Premier did not change his mind at all. The Premier had no occasion to change his mind on a matter of this nature. However, the Leader of the Opposition in another place made a certain statement—an assertion—which was incorrect. The Premier denied that statement, quite correctly.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And I agreed with that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: But the situation developed. As the Minister for Justice I was required to keep a continuous watch on representation. The figures which came forward showed there was some growth in a number of seats.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You mean that this growth has taken place within the last few months?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: This is something which is part of my responsibility. It became apparent that something had to be done; either an automatic redistribution or the introduction of a measure such as this.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are telling us that the growth has just occurred.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The growth has occurred all the time but the seats were not out of balance. As a matter of fact, the situation has changed since we commenced the preparation of this legislation. More seats are out of balance; there is nothing wrong with that. It would be irresponsible of the Government if it did not have regard for the change, and if we did not take the necessary action. It happens to be the role and function of the Government to take the necessary action and I could be criticised, quite validly, by the Opposition if I had not taken some action.

Where would I be today if a number of seats were out of balance and I was asked, in this House, what I was doing about the situation, and I answered that I was doing nothing? Would not the Opposition make hay of such a situation? The Opposition would certainly criticise me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why would we?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Well, I think I would deserve such criticism. Perhaps I could venture the opinion that were I not criticised, in those circumstances, there would be only one reason and that reason would be that the Opposition would not desire to have a redistribution.

The Hon. R. P. Claughton: When did you decide this change was necessary?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Ages ago; I cannot give the exact date.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Why has the seat of Pilbara been left in such a deplorable situation in the rural area? It is completely out of balance with other rural seats.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is so. Perhaps I could answer in the form of a question, if I may. If the Leader of the Opposition, or any member of the Labor Party, were placed in the position of being called upon to do something about that seat, or that province—which is statutory—what would he do about it? I know perfectly well there is a big difference between the Pilbara and other provinces. Sooner or later I have no doubt that Parliament, in its wisdom, will take some action to bring about a greater equity. However, the Leader of the Opposition is aware of the position of the Pilbara, geographically, in relation to the rest of the State and the rest of the electorates.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Some of it could be loaded onto the Kimberley, there is nothing to stop the Government doing that.

The Hon. J. Heitman: The previous Government did nothing about it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Now is the time.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In view of what has been said, and the accusations and references to history, one could refer to the remarks made by the Hon. F. J. S. Wise back in 1947.

The Hon. R. Thompson: When Port Hedland did not have a population of 11 000 people.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In 1947 the Attorney-General (the Hon. R. R. McDonald) introduced a Bill, and what Mr Wise had to say about representation in the north was terribly interesting. His remarks appear at page 2366 of *Parliamentary Debates*, volume 120 of 1947. His comments make interesting reading. Once again, it may well be claimed by the Opposition that his remarks have no relevance because they were made some 30 years ago.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Do you claim they have some relevance?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I believe they do; indeed, I do.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Twenty-eight years after.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You said 18.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is worse at 28.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I indicated earlier that I would refer to the 1947 Act because it had been mentioned so often. The Leader of the Opposition illustrated a lack of knowledge of the Bill before the House when he endeavoured—I do him that credit—perhaps to fool us a little by his reference to a 10 to 15 per cent discretion, more or less, and he asked us what that meant. I would be very surprised if the Leader of the Opposition did not know what that meant. Perhaps he had not read the Bill very carefully, because he referred constantly to this 10 to 15 per cent. The Bill refers to 10 per cent for the metropolitan area and 15 per cent for the country, but there is nothing about 10 to 15 per cent. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition thought we may fall into a little trap, but we are not so green.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Some of your members fell right into it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It may be the Leader of the Opposition did not make himself very clear. He also raised the point about the drawing of the line. I would like to quote from section 4 of the Act of 1947. It reads—

For the purpose of carrying out the duties referred to in the next preceding section, the Commissioners—

(a) shall regard the State as divided into three areas as follows:—

(i) The Metropolitan Area,

(ii) the North-West area, and

- (iii) the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area; and
- (b) shall regard the areas referred to in the next preceding paragraph as respectively comprising the Electoral Districts subsisting at the commencement of this Act and designated opposite the references to those areas in the Second Schedule to this Act.

So the schedule specifies the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right; I did not say it did not.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Under the second schedule the electoral districts—

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not say that at all.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Yes you did.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The schedule sets out the electoral districts which comprise the metropolitan area as provided in section 4 of the 1947 Act, Succeeding Bills—and I am sure you, Mr President, will know of these from your long experience—referred to the final recommendations contained in the *Government Gazette* of the 14th December, 1961.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is rather interesting, of course, because in making these recommendations it was laid down under the Act as to what comprised the metropolitan area. The commissioners were then told, "You may proceed with the division of that area into the various electoral districts." The Act does not specify that the commissioners will draw in the metropolitan area.

It may well be worth-while looking at the debates on the parent legislation. The Attorney-General was asked by the Hon. A. H. Panton about the actual delineation of the metropolitan area, and the Attorney-General replied that it was the boundaries of the existing electoral districts. That became the statutory boundary.

I do not believe it would serve any purpose for me to continue on about this matter. As I say, the measure will correct, and it is intended to correct, a great deal of the imbalance; and it will provide for a furtherance of that objective for future years. We must bear in mind that there is a role for Parliament in these determinations.

I was responsible for preparing the second reading notes to this Bill although the actual speech was delivered in this House by my colleague, the Minister for Education. In the notes it was said that the Government felt it was the role of Parliament to make these changes. This was stated quite clearly and no secret was made of it. I think this action is right and proper when one bears in mind the increase in

population, not just in the metropolitan area but also in the country, mining and pastoral area since the last alteration of boundaries. Obviously there had to be some changes and the changes were made to an enlarged metropolitan area. However critical one wants to be about the positioning of that line, the fact is that it is based upon the best possible natural features or other features suitable for determining boundaries. It does include those areas that are regarded as part of the metropolitan area.

Of course, other people could make suggestions about these boundaries. Mr Claughton wanted to include Wanneroo. He criticised the Government because it draws lines, but he wants to draw a line himself.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You ought to read what I said; I did not say that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Perhaps we ought to include Rockingham, but Rockingham and Safety Bay are not dormitory suburbs of Perth; they are more in the nature of satellite towns.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What would you call Medina?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I agree that certainly Medina could be classed as a dormitory area for Kwinana.

The Hon. R. Thompson: A satellite town, the same as Rockingham.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: From the time it was included, it was in fact a dormitory town for Kwinana, and it has been in the metropolitan area for ages. We could continue to pick out little pieces here and there, but we would not really get anywhere. The fact is that the line and the proposals contained in the Bill will solve the problem in the most fair and effective way that one could conceive.

Coming back to representation, we must bear in mind that four Assembly seats will be allocated to that entire metropolitan area, and two metropolitan province seats will be added—a total of six additional members for the metropolitan area, and preserving the existing numbers in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area. In the light of all the circumstances, including the development in the State, I believe the proposals will be far more effective than the other suggestions and observations we have heard. I hope the House will give its complete and total support to the legislation. I believe it deserves that support.

THE HON. GRACE VAUGHAN (South-East Metropolitan) [11.24 p.m.]: My colleagues have stressed the suspect drawing of this boundary, and I will not dwell on that matter. The point I want to emphasise is how the drawing of the boundary in conjunction with the setting of a statutory number of seats within the metropolitan

area can well lead to a gerrymander. We have heard many references to gerrymandering tonight, and I took the trouble to enlarge an old print of the original gerrymander as I thought members might be interested in it. I will read a little of its history to the House.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It looks a little like "Blue Poles" to me.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: The word "gerrymander" arose in the following way—

In 1812 Governor Elbridge Gerry and the Republican legislature of Massachusetts carved the state into new voting districts. In Essex County they strung 12 towns together in such a way that the heavy Republican vote in one of them (Marblehead) would overbalance the Federalists in the other 11. On the map this district looked like a squatting salamander. Engraver Elkanah Tisdale added claws, wings, and fangs to the map and published it in the *Boston Weekly Messenger* as "THE GERRY-MANDER!" This famous cartoon introduced a permanent word into American politics and helped defeat Governor Gerry for re-election . . . But the gerrymander achieved its purpose. In 1812 only 11 Federalist state senators were elected in Massachusetts to 29 Republicans, although the Federalists got 51 766 popular votes and the Republicans, 50 164.

That means that although the Federalists received more votes, they achieved 11 seats whilst the Republicans achieved 29. That sounds a little familiar to what happens in this State. The report continues—

This looked like cheating to most voters and caused a violent reaction against the Republicans in Massachusetts. In 1813 the original gerrymander was repealed.

So I add my warning to that of Mr Dans. He told the conservative parties to watch out because they may push the public a little too far and there will be some sort of counter productive move.

My reason for believing that this Bill to amend the Electoral Districts Act will lead to a gerrymander is that, as the Minister pointed out, in 1947 an electoral boundary was set for the metropolitan area decided on by electoral districts. It was not until 1965 that amending legislation provided for the setting of boundaries without the commissioners having the right to change those areas as well as the electoral districts. Up to 1965 the commissioners were able to move chunks of one area of the electorate to another.

The insidiousness of this measure is that the right was taken away from the commissioners by the amending legislation in 1965, and consequently the Act does not enable the commissioners to alter the boundaries of the areas themselves. We

will now have the situation that the commissioners will not be permitted to determine the number of districts within an area because it has been set down now that we shall have 27 electorates within the metropolitan area rather than this matter being decided by the obnoxious 2:1 measuring of electors. Yes, it was obnoxious, but at least it was some sort of a nexus to safeguard the situation of the metropolitan voter—at least his situation could get no worse.

We have seen from the trend in the last century that the population is growing at a much faster rate in the metropolitan area than it is in the country. This trend will accelerate still further, and yet the metropolitan area will be stuck with the 27 seats. Members may well say, "Well then, Parliament can alter it." We have seen by the attitude of members opposite that they are doing what comes fairly naturally to human beings; that is, they are sitting rather smugly on a sure thing.

If we consider the way in which the Legislative Council is constituted, it is very unlikely that the 20 country members will vote to decrease the relative position of the country electoral districts as compared with the city. All that could happen would be to adopt the unpopular measure of increasing the number of metropolitan members.

As I said before, the Government cannot go on pushing the people to extreme lengths without some sort of reaction. So, the likelihood of a gerrymander must then be considered. When I look at the proposed metropolitan boundary, I can see a face in it, looking out towards the country and wondering about how the security of the Government can be made even more secure. I asked an artist friend of mine what he could see in the proposed new boundary, and he drew the face of a person looking out to see how he could ensure that the Conservative parties remained in power in this State in perpetuity. Members can see by the drawing I have in my hand that he has seen the face of the Premier in the proposed new boundary.

If we are to go along with the idea of vote weighting in order that country people can be better represented—I find that to be a contradiction in terms—let us consider the full extent to which such weighting could be taken. I cannot see that country people will be better represented—if we take the real meaning of the word—merely because they have less voters per member. It is almost impossible, even for country members who have the smallest numbers of voters within their electorates, to get around and see the people in a way that satisfies them.

I raised this matter when I first spoke in this House. It is almost impossible for me to get around and see 94 000 electors; I could not do it. I do not intend to bore

members by repeating the figures I quoted on that occasion; they might like to refer to *Hansard* and see how I pointed out that such a task would be impossible. Even if Mr Clive Griffiths and I decided to co-operate and take half each, we could not possibly get to walking to the front door of all 47 000 houses, let alone talking to the people about their problems; even if we did not sleep, we could not achieve such an aim.

I agree that Mr Tozer and Mr Dellar cannot approach their electors in the way they would like to in order to ascertain that they are representing them properly.

I believe that in the name of democracy we should divorce the matter of representation from constituent care. "Democracy" as has been stated by historians, philosophers, politicians and political scientists is the principle of one-vote-one-value. Each vote must be equal in value to the next vote. It is a specious argument to say that within an electorate, everybody has an equal vote. That is not good enough, because the people who are representing the electors come into this Chamber and vote on issues which may benefit the smallest number of people relative to the vote in this place.

But surely I do not have to explain to members opposite the meaning of one-vote-one-value; surely they appreciate its meaning. I am not accusing members opposite of any malicious, vindictive, or suspect behaviour in what they are doing here tonight. I think they are rushing headlong into the defeat of democracy without thinking about what they are doing, and I want them to think very seriously about this matter.

I know the decision has already been made; it was made before any of us decided to stand here and beat the air with our tongues, but I cannot allow this occasion to pass without pointing out the features of the legislation I find entirely obnoxious and opposite to my interpretation of democracy.

I return to the subject of the weighting of votes. I have tried to point out how the weighting of votes does not in fact give us better representation. There are plenty of other ways in which this can be achieved. If we are going to talk about weighting, we should not talk about it merely in terms of distance. This may have been a good argument 100 years, 50 years, or even 20 years ago, but it is not very good now. Distance has lost its punch.

If we consider weighting in terms of distance, where do we arrive if we take it to its ultimate conclusion? Let us take the case of Perth, although the same would apply to any of the larger towns of Western Australia. In the case of Perth, we would have to work in concentric circles from the city until we reached the isolated areas, weighting the vote according to the

distance from the capital city. That is ridiculous!

But what if we then introduced other factors apart from distance, such as the problem of communications? We might have to decide whether the ability to receive television transmission, or the frequency of aeroplane services, or even their very presence should be taken into consideration when weighting a vote. Perhaps then we would begin to look around to see what other features we could include in our weighting.

We might well find in the metropolitan area some very important factors relating to disadvantages which require consideration. We might get some decision makers with aesthetic leanings who might decide that creative people should have more votes. Or we might have the example quoted by Mr Dans relating to the brain surgeon and the country drink waiter.

If we are going to talk about weighting and be fair dinkum let us look at what will happen ultimately. In our society today we hear talk about productivity and financial contribution being in the minds of many people. We do not know who will be the decision makers, but we might well find introduced into this weighting business factors which are quite repulsive to many of us. They might be acceptable to some, but not to others.

So, we might end up having to appoint a commission to weigh up all these things and consult all sorts of experts to decide the worth of each elector before deciding on the value of his vote.

I envisage that the person who would have the most votes would be the most physically attractive white Caucasian protestant male.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Liberal.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Liberal, of course; he would have to be a conservative! He would need to have made some sort of contribution to community interest. Religion does not come into it a great deal.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are taking all this from behind the black stump, are you not?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: He would be at a bit of a disadvantage if he were not a protestant.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I hope the honourable member can relate these remarks to the Bill. I am finding it difficult to follow what she is saying.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: To me, Mr President, my remarks are vital to the principle of weighting.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot possibly see what religion has to do with this Bill.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: It has to do with the weighting of votes; the weighting that is introduced in this legislation relates to whether one lives in the metropolitan area or in the rural area. In other

words, is one in or out; is one an ingroup or an outgroup?

If we are going to be fair dinkum about this and if we really believe we should give more value to the vote of a person who is disadvantaged by reason of physical distance or by lack of communication facilities, there is no end to the extent to which we can take such a ludicrous philosophy.

We have heard a great deal about what other countries and organisations do in regard to representation. I believe we should lay that one straightaway. The sorts of illustrations which have been introduced tonight are relative to representation of sovereign bodies.

One finds representation of sovereign bodies in the United Nations, and one finds representation of sovereign bodies of the States in the Australian Senate. So, this is a different kind of representation. Indeed, it has nothing to do with representing the interests of people within a State in order to govern the State.

In the United States of America, which is a country similar in size to Australia, and which has the same sort of rural genesis in the history of modern man, we find that in the 1960s the Supreme Court decided in the *Baker versus Carr* case there must be equality of representation, and so did the reapportionment decisions. In this regard I refer to the publication "Democracy under Pressure" by Cummings and Wise. In referring to the principle of one man, one vote the publication states—

During the 1960's, the Supreme Court ruled in a series of *reapportionment* decisions that each person's vote should be worth as much as another's. Yet, the decisions were controversial, for they upset the balance of political power between urban and rural areas in the United States. The result was a concerted but unsuccessful effort in Congress and the states to amend the Constitution to overturn the Supreme Court rulings.

The State Legislatures. All votes are equal when each member of a legislative body represents the same number of people.

I emphasise the words used: "All votes are equal when each member of a legislative body represents the same number of people."

Further on the following appears—

But in 1962, in *Baker v. Carr*,³⁷ the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the voters who had challenged the established order in Tennessee. In 1964, in *Reynold v. Sims*,³⁸ the Supreme Court made it clear that the Fourteenth Amendment requires that seats in both houses of a state legislature be based on population. Second, the Court ruled that although legislative districts might not be drawn with "mathematical exactness or precision" they must be based "substantially"

on population. The Court had laid down the principle of "one man, one vote."

Of course, the conservative and rural forces reacted strongly to the Supreme Court rulings, but that did not do them any good.

In the United States after each 10-year census the Federal law requires that the number of representatives for each State be reapportioned on the basis of population. If a State gains or loses congressmen, the State Legislature "redistricts" by drawing new boundary lines for its House districts. So, we can see that the United States of America has managed to bring about the adoption of one-vote-one-value as closely as possible.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You are also aware the USA is now expressing serious reservations about that system.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Serious reservations are being held by the conservative elements, and by some rural voters and rural representatives, but not by the bulk of the people or the poorer people.

One of the sad features in the philosophy behind the Electoral Districts Act is the partition that is being created between the country voter and the city voter. This is something I have come to regret very deeply; the attitude of some members of this House which reflects the paranoid feeling that the city people hate the country people.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Who said that?

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Members on this side of the House have been accused of hating country people. I think this is a very sad state of affairs, and apparently members opposite also think the same, because they are defending themselves by saying this is not happening at all. This comes down to a matter of segregation, and we have segregated the metropolitan vote. Segregation is the placing apart of one part from the rest, and I think that has happened in the case of the metropolitan voter.

Distance has been the only criterion that has been used to decide what representation the people require. This has militated against the country voter and the country member in looking at the problems which confront the metropolitan voter. These problems are not helped by the fact that a metropolitan province has as many as 94 000 electors.

There has been some miscalculation in regard to the benefit that is claimed to be brought to the metropolitan voters under the provisions of the Bill. In this respect I refer to the second reading speech of the Minister. I am afraid he talked some hypocritical nonsense; he talked about how the Government, as a necessary consequence of the extension of the boundaries of the metropolitan area, would increase magnanimously the

number of electoral districts within the metropolitan area.

That is so much nonsense, because under the existing provisions in the Act this would happen anyway. In point of fact—we have not been told this—a rough calculation has ascertained that in extending the metropolitan boundary, as proposed in the Bill, we will bring 30 000 more electors into the metropolitan area. Given this increased number of electors and the increase in the number of seats, we would have been one seat better off in the metropolitan area—if we left the new voters in the metropolitan area and decreased the voters in the country—by dividing 51 seats which would belong to the metropolitan area, and the agricultural, mining and pastoral area.

We would have received one more seat in the metropolitan area. I will not haggle on that point. I might even admit that we would end up with the same number of 27 in the metropolitan area and 28 in the country, and in the decision making for the 51 seats we would have had 24, but I am including the four seats in the north-west and the Murchison-Eyre area for the purpose of my argument, because too often we are told there are 27 metropolitan and 24 rural seats and we just forget there are also four more up north, making the numbers 27 and 28.

There was not anything magnanimous about the Government giving four more seats in the metropolitan area because that would have occurred anyway under the present legislation.

I want to point out one of the fallacies that have been bandied around here to-night in regard to one improvement that is supposed to occur in the metropolitan area. Under the present set-up we have an average of 17 600 electors in the Assembly seats in the metropolitan area, and this will be improved and be 16 100 under this legislation. This is again on the basis that we have only 30 000 more electors in the metropolitan area.

Of course the rural area at the same time is being altered. In the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area we had 9 100 as an average. These are on the figures as at the 28th July. Again working on the 30 000 extra, this will be reduced to 7 900. So although the metropolitan area vote has received an advantage for immediate calculations anyway, it has a lesser average value. Numbers are still in excess of twice the rural area in relation to the metropolitan area. It still has an excess of instead of the ratio being 1.8:1 it will be 2.3:1.

So the improvement in the metropolitan area can be seen as being rather deceptive. I am not so terribly concerned about that. I am just pointing it out to demonstrate there is no necessity to increase the metropolitan numbers because this would

have occurred automatically. What concerns us very much indeed is the fact that the boundary has been drawn in conjunction with a set number of seats in the metropolitan area, particularly if the anticipated population trend eventuates.

Doxiadis, the famous Greek planner expects that at the end of next century 95 per cent of the world's population will be living in cities. In view of the fact that now a little over a third of the population lives in cities in other parts of the world—but Australia has close to 80 per cent of its population living in cities—it certainly looks as though Australia will reach that 95 per cent a long time before the anticipated world average reaches that percentage.

So we must consider the increase in population numbers in the metropolitan area and the likelihood of those boundaries being extended. We can visualise that we could with our gerrymander end up with forks going all over the place. We would have a gerrymander to make this one look sick. We could have tongues of electorates forking out all over the place in order to gobble up settlements not considered to be rural, and so we could have forks snaking up to Geraldton, down to Albany, and across to Kalgoorlie without any trouble at all.

I am not saying that is what this Government will do, but that the Act with the proposed amendments will create a situation which could become extremely dangerous to our democratic ways. I consider this is a downgrading of the metropolitan voter.

In conclusion I want to quote some words written by Martin Luther King when he was imprisoned for opposing what he called unjust laws. The words were written in the Birmingham Gaol on the 6th April, 1963, and read—

Any law that uplifts human personality is just, any law that degrades human personality is unjust.

All segregation Statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.

I oppose the Bill. I hope that members of the Government will think clearly and long on it. I know it is difficult for them to vote against the way they have been instructed to vote.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: There are no instructions.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: However, this is a real matter of the survival of democracy.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [11.57 p.m.]: Mrs Vaughan said that she made her contribution tonight for the sake of posterity. I have my doubts whether posterity will be all that grateful. Her contribution struck me as being a most

illogical diatribe. One point to which I wish to refer is the constant use of the term "gerrymander". The honourable member read out a description of the word which I suppose everyone in politics has read for himself or herself.

Any area which has to be divided must have a boundary. The boundaries of Western Australia are set by the coast and the boundaries between Western Australia and South Australia, and Western Australian and the Northern Territory. For a number of years there has been a boundary around the metropolitan area. However, as the honourable member must surely know, a gerrymander is when a particular electorate is so organised that it takes in a majority of the voters for the party it is desired should be elected and absorbs a minority of the votes of the party it is desired to defeat. That has to be done with malice aforethought drawing every single line of every single electorate.

To say that this Bill constitutes a gerrymander is a complete, utter, and malicious fabrication. Under our system it is totally and absolutely impossible to get a gerrymander in the classic sense as described by Mrs Vaughan because the division of the area is handed over to a reputable group which has no relationship with politics or with political parties, anyway.

As several speeches have been based on that sort of assertion, they have no value. I think members ought to accept that.

As I read the introductory speech to this Bill, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for Justice, I suppose it is left to me to commend the second reading.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith): This Bill requires the concurrence of an absolute majority of the Chamber. In accordance with Standing Order 308 a division must be taken.

Bells rung and House divided.

Ayes—17

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. T. O. Perry
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. J. Heltman	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. V. J. Ferry
Hon. G. E. Masters	(Teller)

Noes—9

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. D. K. Dans
Hon. R. T. Leeson	(Teller)

The PRESIDENT: I declare the question carried with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 12.04 a.m.
(Wednesday).

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 30th September, 1975

The SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (9): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Chicken Meat Industry Committee Bill.
2. Radiation Safety Bill.
3. Acts Amendment (Judicial Salaries and Pensions) Bill.
4. Marketing of Barley Act Amendment Bill.
5. Railways Discontinuance and Land Revestment Bill.
6. Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill.
7. Criminal Code Amendment Bill.
8. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act Amendment Bill.
9. Transport Commission Act Amendment Bill.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER'S REPORT Tabling

THE SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson): I have for tabling the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations for the year ended the 30th June, 1975.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 421).

QUESTIONS (29): ON NOTICE

1. CANNING VALE PRISON

Construction

Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

In view of the concern being shown by the Fremantle prison authorities regarding the overcrowding of the Fremantle Gaol, will the Minister advise what exactly is happening with regard to the construction of the gaol already commenced at Canning Vale?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

I am assured that the Department of Corrections is not concerned at the alleged overcrowding in Fremantle Prison. The muster at present fluctuates at between 375 and 400, as compared with 623 in 1971-72.

An amount of \$293 242.95 has been expended on the erection