

ELECTORAL AND PARLIAMENTARY CHANGE, REFERENDUM

Motion

MR BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.01 pm]: I move -

That this House supports the Liberal Party's call for a referendum on the significant electoral and parliamentary change.

During this debate the Opposition will demonstrate a number of points. The first is quite simple: the Government does not have a mandate for the electoral change it is attempting to ram through this Parliament. The second point is that the Government, at best, has misled the community over its intentions and, at worst, has attempted to utterly deceive the community by providing a promise on the one hand and delivering a completely different product on the other.

What is the justification for a referendum? The Liberal Party and other opposition parties are very strongly in favour of a referendum if the Government's proposed changes are to be progressed. We are dealing with an extremely significant issue of public policy, which goes to the very heart of the process of democracy in this State. Anyone on the street, let alone a learned academic or someone involved in the political sphere, when asked whether the fundamental basis of our democratic system should be changed without the Government going to the people for a final decision, would be opposed to the idea. Since this issue has arisen, a huge groundswell of support has developed for the notion of holding a referendum before any major changes are made to the electoral system. That comes not only from members on this side of the Chamber; I argue that the vast majority of the community want to be involved in the decision-making process.

In November 1996, the member for Victoria Park, now the Premier, said that, if elected, the Labor Party would empower people by holding a people's convention. The Labor Party did not say just that it wanted people involved in the process through a referendum. It proposed holding a convention for the purpose of consultation and deliberation on a range of very important electoral issues. By contrast, legislation is now being rammed through this Parliament with very little attention to the principles behind our democratic process. It has far more to do with mathematics, in particular the mathematics of success for the Labor Party.

How often have members heard that people do not trust politicians? A survey a couple of weeks ago showed that, unfortunately, we politicians are still ranked below used car salesmen, and just about every other profession. At the top of the list were people such as firemen, nurses and pharmacists. The member for Murray-Wellington would be all right with his background as a pharmacist. Others amongst us, unfortunately, are members of the least trusted species this side of the Congo. There is an enormous amount of cynicism about the political process. The Labor Party, with this legislation, will feed that cynicism.

Mr McGinty interjected.

MR BARRON-SULLIVAN: The minister, who is interjecting, will feed that cynicism. The people see through blatant political expediency, and what the Labor Party is attempting.

Mr McGinty: It is as a result of the arrogance of the Liberal Party that people are cynical about it. The Liberal Party breeds cynicism.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dean): Order, members!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I was being very fair in my comment. I was referring to politicians in general. A cynicism exists in the community about the political process. The Labor Party is attempting to feed that cynicism.

A referendum is one of the purest forms of democracy. In fact, the irony for members opposite is that a referendum would be based on their so-called principle of one vote, one value. It would reflect, directly, the numbers in metropolitan, country and remote areas. A referendum would also provide for a very extensive public debate on this issue. I accept that the Commission on Government recommended one vote, one value several years ago, but it did not recommend the principle that the Labor Party is espousing. It went much further, to recommend a very detailed and intricate structural change to the process of electoral affairs in this State. Most importantly, the Commission on Government recommended that any structural change to our electoral system should be firmly enshrined in the State's Constitution - the Acts that make up, in effect, Western Australia's equivalent of a constitution. It went one step further, to suggest a number of other things, such as a constitutional convention. The key point I wish to stress, is that the Commission on Government said that, if major changes were to be made to the State's electoral system, they should be enshrined in the Constitution. A strong degree of entrenchment should be provided to prevent politicians from changing, willy-nilly, these key components of the underlying basis of our democratic system. Interestingly, the member for Victoria Park, the

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present Premier, committed the Labor Party to exactly that approach, with no qualification. Not only was his commitment at the time totally unqualified, it has never been rescinded or qualified since then and, indeed, people who are close to politics and follow the detail of the political scene, have always held the view that he has not changed his opinion. I have never heard him indicate otherwise. Now, without any explanation, the Premier and the Government have gone back on that commitment, and introduced legislation that actually reduces the degree of entrenchment of the electoral laws. As members will be aware, section 13 of the Electoral Distribution Act 1947 contained a very firm requirement for an absolute majority of the Parliament if any changes were to be made to these key elements of our electoral system.

That provision is being gutted, and the principle of entrenchment is being removed from some of the most important aspects of our electoral system. This is not the sort of issue that would encourage people to lie in bed and read about in a novel. It is not particularly exciting stuff for many people, but it is exceedingly important. The idea of entrenchment of constitutional procedure and of enshrining in the Constitution key aspects of our electoral system provides an anchor for our electoral system. It maintains stability. The devious way in which the Government has suddenly introduced legislation to get around the need for such entrenchment of the fundamental principles of our democratic system says much about what it is trying to achieve with its so-called electoral reform agenda. Any proposal to water down the entrenchment provisions is abhorrent to the community and the people who follow the political scene and fully appreciate the principles behind entrenchment. This is a significant move. One would think that the Minister for Electoral Affairs and the Premier would explain in some detail why they are prepared to veer away from those underlying principles. We have not heard boo. We have not heard the minister or the Premier say a single word explaining why they plan to undermine our constitutional arrangements and why they have gone back on the Labor Party's very clear commitment in this regard. The Minister for Electoral Affairs was the Leader of the Opposition in 1995 when a number of these recommendations were made. Not all the recommendations were made then, because not all the Commission on Government's reports had been produced. However, the minister firmly indicated in a press release that his Caucus unanimously supported those measures. We had a rightful expectation that the Government would uphold those principles and that it would not introduce a piece of legislation in an underhanded way to try to undermine these very important principles. Political expediency is neither a good nor valid reason to dispense with universally accepted democratic principles.

Let us look at the Government's claim that it has a mandate. How many times have we heard that, both inside and outside this Chamber? The Government's claim to a mandate is wafer-thin. The Government publicised its planned electoral change in some electorates during the election campaign, but it did so in a very misleading and limited way. Our research failed to find any mention of the Government's electoral change proposals in a number of seats throughout the State. The areas in which the issue was in the public arena, in which the Press gave it some attention and in which election material was distributed by one political party or another, tended to be country areas where the issue had previously been raised by the Liberal or National Parties. A number of electorates heard no mention of the electoral change proposal during the election campaign, yet the Government claims it has a mandate. The issue is not only whether the Government put out the message, but also whether the Government told the whole story. How were the Government's very detailed and important proposed changes to the electoral system publicised in Kalgoorlie? I have in front of me a piece of Labor Party propaganda published during the election campaign. It clearly states -

LABOR WILL NOT ABOLISH 16 COUNTRYSEATS

Government members interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The cabbage patch has come to life again. The cabbage patch is right; 16 seats would have been abolished if the Labor Party had lived up to its policy to apply its changes to the upper House.

Mr McGinty: The Greens (WA) would not let us.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will touch on that later.

As it is, eight country seats will be lost. That figure of 16 is correct and has been vindicated by some of the measures the Government has proposed in the past. I continue -

There will always be 2 Goldfields MLA's.

I have looked at the legislation, and I am scratching to get my calculator to go past the number "1".

Mr McRae: But there is only one member for the goldfields now - the other member is the member for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The simple fact is that this Parliament has one very effective member for Kalgoorlie, and a member for Eyre. Under the Labor Party's proposals, there will be only one member; not two

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as is reflected in the commitment sent to the people in the goldfields. In other words, the Labor Party, deliberately or otherwise, misled the people in that area.

Mr Day: No doubt it was deliberately.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I would agree with the member, but I am not so cynical - I say that tongue in cheek. I continue -

Under Labor country seats will have 17,000 electors and city seats 23,000.

Those figures do not equate with the proposals contained in the legislation. This piece of Labor Party propaganda, which was distributed in the Kalgoorlie area, is inaccurate, deceptive and misleading. It is on the basis of this sort of propaganda that the Government claims it has a mandate. Let us go closer to my home town of Bunbury, in which more propaganda was distributed. It is clever wording. It has the Premier's smiling face and signature on the front, and is headed "My Guarantee". It is signed "Geoff Gallop State Labor Leader". It is too clever by half. It states -

My Guarantee

to the electors of Bunbury and Mitchell

"There will always be at least two members of State Parliament for the Bunbury/Mitchell Region.

Mr McNee: Is it signed "Dodgy Brothers"?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Yes, it does say that at the bottom. Actually, it is authorised by the Labor Party; I suppose it is the same thing. It has great wording: two members will still cover the same area. The Premier did not explain that the members will not cover the same geographical area. In fact, instead of the city of Bunbury having two members of Parliament, as it has done for decades, it will have only one member. The members for Bunbury and Mitchell will represent much larger areas, ultimately reducing their representative capabilities. This is blatantly deceitful propaganda, and the Premier is not prepared to tell the community the full story. That is hardly surprising, because he knows what the response would be if he told the whole story.

Westpolls may not be the most accurate form of market research, but from time to time they provide a fairly good indication of the community feeling on a particular issue. We can allow some margin for error when a Westpoll survey says that 51 per cent think one thing and 49 per cent think another. However, a recent Westpoll survey found that 33 per cent of respondents supported the Government's so-called one vote, one value plans and that a whopping 57 per cent supported the current system, with 7 per cent undecided. Almost twice as many people oppose the Government's plans than support them. Where is the mandate? People might think this survey included only those wicked conservative voters and country people who do not want to see the system changed, but 51 per cent - a majority - of Perth voters supported the current system. It goes without saying that 76 per cent of country voters supported the present system. I wonder whether the division was along party-political grounds. As I said, it is obviously the wicked conservatives - the Liberal and National Party people - who support the status quo.

It states in this document that 51 per cent of Labor voters support the current system. Therefore, even among the true believers - the Labor Party's own supporters - a bare majority supports the status quo. I am scratching to find the mandate I keep hearing about. I have seen nothing about it so far.

Mr Kucera: It's called an election, if you didn't notice.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I shall jump a couple of points and deal with that interjection, as I was not going to touch on that matter just yet. The Deputy Premier, the member for Belmont, said it all on 13 March 1997 in this quote -

... democracy means that the majority rules.

That is very simple stuff. Let us go to the election to see if the majority voted for the Government's plans on electoral change. If one assumes that the community was aware of what the Government was planning and that the Government did not mislead the community about its plans by hiding what it really intended, the fact is that the Government got only 37 per cent of the vote. I am looking at the Deputy Premier's comment that democracy means that the majority rules yet, on 37 per cent of the vote, somehow the Government has a mandate. I cannot see this mandate thing.

Mr Sweetman: It is more like a mankad!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I agree. This mandate is very hard to find. We are dealing with some of the most important and fundamental principles of our democratic process. Let us look at Kalgoorlie to see whether the former member for Kalgoorlie - a member of the Labor Party - supported the assertion that the Government had

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a mandate for electoral change. One would assume that she would have been supportive of this policy. It obviously did not contribute to the change of member in Kalgoorlie. In the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of 12 February 2001, Ms Anwyl is quoted as saying a number of things, including -

She said one-vote one-value . . . had also been influential in the swing away from Labor.

Is that not a helluva mandate? A former parliamentary Labor Party member said that one of the key reasons she lost her seat was the Government's policy on electoral change. That is one heck of a mandate. That is not the sort of mandate I would enjoy.

Mr Birney: It was the Labor Party's oldest seat.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: It was its oldest seat in which it had been entrenched for seven decades or so. The Labor Party lost that seat and claimed to have a mandate. I have tried to find the mandate because, again, I have not seen it. This issue goes one step further because not only did the Commission on Government recommend that major electoral change -

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Hodson-Thomas): Order! There are too many conversations happening in the Chamber. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. The Commission on Government said not only that major electoral change should be enshrined in the Constitution, but also that principles such as the Government's so-called one vote, one value principle should be decided in a referendum. Guess what? The member for Victoria Park, now the Premier, committed Labor to that policy. The Premier committed the Labor Party firmly and in an unqualified way to holding a referendum on exactly the issue before this Parliament today. He has never rescinded that commitment and has never explained why he wanted a referendum and electoral changes enshrined in the Constitution then, but does not want any of that to happen now. He owes the community Western Australia an explanation for the dramatic shift in the underlying principles behind his approach to electoral affairs.

If members opposite doubt me - I can see some quizzical looks on their faces - they should read page 59 of the report of the Commission on Government (No 5), which reports are becoming collector's items. I quote -

The rules for drawing electoral boundaries for the Legislative Assembly are subject to change by the government of the day. Change can occur with even greater ease if the government also commands a majority in the Legislative Council. The most important features of an electoral system, the rules concerning the composition of the house and drawing boundaries, require constitutional recognition.

There is a recommendation in the COG report that the Constitution Act 1889 be amended so that the Legislative Council comprise members directly elected by the people with proportional representation from multi-member regions, such regions having equality of involvement with a 15 per cent permissible deviation.

Another recommendation in the report in effect applies the so-called one vote, one value principle to the lower House. There are two key recommendations concerning the Labor Party's beloved one vote, one value principle in both Houses and they both say the principle should be enshrined in the Constitution. Another recommendation states that when that is done, the community should decide by way of referendum. A submission in the COG report states -

At a public hearing in Perth, Dr Geoff Gallop MLA made the point that:

. . . there is a very contradictory treatment of referenda in the constitution. As you are aware, some clauses of the state constitution do require reference to the people if they are to be amended but others don't.

The next sentence is the key -

I really think the constitution . . . ought to be a document of the people and therefore subject to the people's reference if it is to be changed.

Therefore the Premier said that he agreed that the principle of one vote, one value that the Labor Party holds so dearly should be enshrined in the Constitution and that he agreed it should go to a referendum of the people.

The member for Riverton laughs, but that is precisely what his Premier said in the past. This is the standard we are dealing with in debating one of the most important public policy issues in this State this year.

Mr McRae: He said electoral reform was Labor Party policy.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Did he? I think I heard the member for Riverton say, "Don't trust the Premier." I would have to agree.

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The ACTING SPEAKER: Order members! There are too many conversations happening across the Chamber. One member is on his feet and he is addressing the House and me. I ask members to please show some courtesy to Hansard.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I want to demonstrate the sort of principles and the devious approach we must deal with in the way that the Labor Party is handling this vitally important issue. I take members back to 21 January 1997. Members will recall some discussion, but no firm proposals, about whether the President of the upper House should be given a deliberative vote. There was a great deal of discussion about the matter, as there has been recently. The implications of whether one political party or another might have the numbers to obtain an absolute majority and thereby effect constitutional change to areas such as electoral reform were obviously serious. I quote from *The West Australian* of that day -

Opposition Leader Geoff Gallop said the proposal to upgrade the president's voting rights was a cynical attempt to subvert the will of WA voters.

In recent weeks the Premier has proposed exactly that form of action as a crude way to give the Labor Party the numbers it might need, in conjunction with the Greens (WA) in the upper House, to achieve electoral reform.

I do not want to go into the ins and outs of whether it is a good thing for the President of the upper House to have a deliberative vote, although I point out that the upper House is structured and was formulated in a manner very different from the Senate, which allows for its umpire to have a deliberative vote.

Mr Hyde: It was set up when Aboriginals did not have the vote. Do you endorse that?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Good grief! Is this the extent of debate that the House will have on this issue? It is unbelievable. In 1997 the Premier said that a proposal to upgrade the President's voting rights was a cynical attempt to subvert the will of Western Australian voters. He has changed his mind and all members on the other side of the House can do is jump in and defend him without any explanation. The other side of the House has changed its position completely. I will come to the explanation in a few minutes.

The Commission on Government set out a number of principles. The Premier agreed to the principles and we now have legislation that veers away from those principles so seriously it is not funny. Let us look at the reason for that, and to do that we must look at the proposals put before the Parliament by the Government. I will not go into them in great detail as they will be the subject of extensive debate when the legislation is dealt with by the House. I will deal with some of the underlying principles that the Government is now clinging to on electoral affairs. Has the Government applied the principle of one vote, one value? The answer is no, the principle has not gone anywhere near the upper House despite the fact that the Premier and other members have consistently championed the need for the upper House to see an end to the weighting of votes in country areas. The latest conference of the Labor Party endorsed the policy of one vote, one value for both Houses of Parliament. The upper House has been left out of this legislation almost in its entirety, and certainly in relation to this so-called one vote, one value principle.

The situation is even more interesting in the lower House. Under the Government's proposals, the lower House does not have one vote, one value. The most obvious examples are in the northern area, the goldfields and one agricultural region seat. The Government has a proposal for dummy voters; they are called notional voters in the legislation. The Australian Electoral Commission refers to them as dummy voters. I will stick with that term as I think it is appropriate. In every electorate that is 100 000 square kilometres or more, the Government will allow one dummy voter for every extra 200 square kilometres.

Mr Barnett: It is a phantom or virtual voter.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: These are not people who exist; they cannot go to a polling booth and vote. They are exactly as the Leader of the Opposition describes them; they are totally illusory. They are not there. Under the Government's plans and depending where the boundaries are, the Gascoyne area would have about 12 500 real people eligible to vote but would have about 7 000 dummy voters. To make the magical quota that is required under the so-called one vote, one value policy, the seat would have 12 500 real voters and 7 000 dummy voters. To make the mathematics stack up for a seat like that and for a seat like the Kimberley, the Government will impose a 20 per cent variance in addition to the special vote weighting that it is allowing for large electorates.

Mr Hyde: It is what the Liberal Party in Queensland voted for.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will touch on that in a minute. We will have an amazing system in which vote weighting will exist in some seats but not others. Let us look at the seats and the political impact of doing this. There are six upper House seats in the Mining and Pastoral and Agricultural Regions and the Liberal Party holds two of them. If we applied a strict one vote, one value regime, the quota would be equivalent to 3.2 lower House

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seats; that is, only three members of Parliament. Through the dummy voter system, the whopping 20 per cent variance and its magical mathematics, the Labor Party has stretched out the system so it can get another seat in the region. What else does that do? It means that all the seats are bright red Labor seats. During the election, the Labor Party promised that the goldfields would have two seats, but under this system it would have only one. It means that the poor old member for Ningaloo will really have his work cut out. The member would win that seat because I know how hard he works. We saw what happened in the last election. He would have to represent the area from Carnarvon to the desert and from the Kimberley to the goldfields. I am sure that the member would want to talk about that.

The mathematics add up very nicely for the Labor Party, but it goes further than that. The Labor Party has not stuck to a strict principle of one vote, one value because it has allowed a 10 per cent variance in other seats. People could say that is fair enough because it allows the electoral commissioners to draw up boundaries based on communities and it gives them a degree of flexibility. It still provides a variation of plus or minus 10 per cent. The crunch applies with the way the figures will be calculated. They will be calculated on four-year projections. When one uses four-year projections, plus or minus 10 per cent, there are seats that have an enormous disparity in the number of voters. There will be high-growth seats such as mine in the country, areas like Wanneroo and areas south of Perth that will be scaled down for the purpose of determining the number of voters in those electorates. Other areas will be scaled up because they either have low growth or the prospect of some decline. There will be enormous disparities in the system. Where is the mandate for this? The system will mean that one vote, one value does not exist for the upper House and it is not firmly established in the lower House. The Premier and the Labor Party said that it would make changes in a particular way and that it would hold a referendum. None of these things has seen the light of day. I am struggling to find the mandate. This legislation does not stack up with what the Labor Party said it would do. There could be further amendments to this legislation; it may emerge from the upper House with amendments, we do not know. There is no way there could be a mandate for an end result that we, at this stage, do not know. It makes sense to make a commitment to go to the people and let them decide on the final model to be put through the Parliament, if one gets through both Houses.

What is this all about? In a nutshell, it is about 1 790 votes. If that number of votes changes in six seats, there will be a change of government. Although my colleagues and I are sitting on this side of the House and we are not too proud of the election result, we have learnt a few lessons from it. People did not rush out and embrace the Labor Party. The Labor Party got 37 per cent of the vote; it was not an enormous mandate for what the Labor Party stands for. As a result, the Liberal and National Parties and others are only six seats away from regaining government - 1 790 votes in six seats sees a change of government. That is the case unless the Labor Party can get out its calculator and introduce legislation that stacks the deck. The House does not have to take my word for it. I assure members that the general perception is that there is a total lack of principle behind what the Labor Party is doing and it is feeding public cynicism about the political process. It is not reflected only in the viewpoint of this side of the House.

I refer members to an editorial in *The West Australian* of 3 August this year that hits the nail right on the head. It states -

. . . Labor proposes to deny the principle of one vote, one value, which it professes to espouse, by allowing exceptions in big, remote regions where it holds seats.

It has summed up in one paragraph what took me five minutes to explain.

Mr McRae interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: I will read it again -

. . . Labor proposes to deny the principle of one vote, one value, which it professes to espouse . . .

Not bring it in; deny it. It continues -

This principle can be sustained only if it applies uniformly to all voters. Anything else is electoral manipulation.

Labor is good: it knows the meaning of that word; it certainly knows how to operate it. It continues -

Labor asserts that it won a mandate from the people to carry out its electoral changes.

But the people had no say in the dubious means that are now proposed to achieve these changes.

Furthermore, a primary vote of just over 37 per cent can hardly be claimed as a mandate . . .

The member for Hillarys stressed that point a moment ago: 37 per cent is not a mandate. The final paragraph is a doozey. It reads -

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This electoral reform agenda looks increasingly like an exercise in securing political advantage and cementing Labor in office.

The West Australian got it in one. That is the feeling in the community, because of the underhanded, deceitful way that this Government has gone about bringing in change.

The Government does not have a mandate on this matter. The Government and the Premier have broken promises and made commitments, which they have failed to keep and have failed to explain why they are not keeping them. The Labor Party has misled the community about its plans on electoral change and this legislation is being rammed through Parliament in a most dubious way. The Labor Party has repealed whole lots of legislation and then brings virtually all the same legislation back again, and does not have the guts to go to the upper House and say, "This is our reform agenda, this is what we want the Parliament to agree on; we will respect the opinion of the people of Western Australia; we will respect the underlying principles of our democratic process; we will go out to the people and say that we have a plan, we have brought it through Parliament, we have enshrined these principles in the Constitution, and now we want the people to endorse what we have put up." There has been none of that from the Labor Party. It is out with the calculator; it is how can it rig the boundaries; it is how can it jack up the quotas in some areas and pull them right down in others. It's attitude is: "Let us create some dummy voters and have four seats in the Mining and Pastoral Region so we will have a good chance of winning each one; we will make it more difficult for the member for Ningaloo and the member for Kalgoorlie to get back in next time." That is what this is all about.

We have a choice today. The onus is on the country members in the Labor Party, in particular. All the members on the other side of the House - seven, plus an Independent Labor member; so there are eight in all - have the opportunity today to demonstrate their commitment to their local communities. We are lucky on this side of the fence because we are able to cross the floor without being chucked out of the party. I know it is difficult for those in the Labor Party. They have these manacles strapping them to their leadership. If the leadership moves onto this side, they have to follow, bleating like sheep; if they stay there, they keep their chains on. It is a bit like the old galleys which used to have the slaves chained in underneath, but when the ship starts sinking they have to remember that they are chained to that ship. The leadership up on the top - the ones in these nice, safe seats - are the ones who will stay up there or jump in the lifeboat. The others are chained down with the oars in their hands and they will go down with the ship.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Hodson-Thomas): Order, members!

Mr Board: They are the anchor.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: They are the anchor. The member for Perth is actually the anchor on that side. It will be interesting to see what happens when the Labor Party throws him overboard.

Seriously, country members on both sides of the House will have to make up their minds today where they stand on this issue once and for all. We will be taking this issue to each country area, as well as into the metropolitan regions, and we will be telling the voters in those country electorates precisely how the member for Bunbury, the member for Eyre and the member for Albany voted.

Members are grinning and making a joke of this now, but this is one of the most important country issues. I will demonstrate this by using one simple figure.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Did I hear the member from the wheatbelt? Did I hear a member acknowledge that the wheatbelt has some significant problems? I do not think anyone in this House would doubt that. A number of members from this side went to Lake Grace the other day. I might add, not one Labor Party member had the guts to go to Lake Grace. Even a Greens (WA) upper House member went, and she stood there and took a lot of flak from people because she was defending the case of one vote, one value in the lower House, but she was there putting the point of view forward. I give her her due! No Labor Party members were there.

When this matter is taken back to those communities, it will remind them how Labor Party country members voted. I assure members that no matter what sort of mathematical wizardry they come up with, it will not defend them at the next election.

I want to use the wheatbelt example, because we all acknowledge that the wheatbelt has serious problems and they must be overcome in the next couple of years. If one looks at the representation from the wheatbelt in Parliament - from Esperance through to Geraldton and particularly the farming territories in between - one would

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have to agree that if ever an area does it tough it is the farming community throughout that region. Under the Labor Party's proposal, those territories in the wheatbelt, out of a total of 57 members in the Legislative Assembly, will get three representatives - just three people to represent their interests in this House! Anyone on the street would say that if we want to look after areas such as the wheatbelt, they have to be given a fair voice in this Chamber and in the Parliament. The Labor Party is trying to deny that voice.

I will finish, because I know other members are keen to make comments, by referring to something else the Premier has said. It is incredibly disappointing that when we are debating the most important issue in this Parliament for country representation this year, the Premier is not here. I appreciate the minister is here today, but the Premier has led the charge for the Labor Party on this issue. Since the Premier took over leadership of the Labor Party five years ago, it is the Premier, the member for Victoria Park, who made the commitments and said that he would enshrine these important principles in the Constitution; it is the Premier who said he would hold a referendum. I point out that not only has the Premier changed his mind, but he also describes the idea of a referendum today -

Mr Hyde interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The member for Perth says that we are a democracy. The Deputy Premier has already given a very succinct definition of a democracy. I agree with him. Basically, it is that the majority rules - let the majority decide; let the people decide. The Labor Party says it supports that principle. There is no purer form of democracy than a referendum. Yet on 31 July, the Premier referred to that as "lunacy", then dropped this legislation.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: Then drop this legislation and wait until it can be done properly.

Not only did the Premier refer to the idea of a referendum as "lunacy", but also in another question in this Chamber on 1 August, he went one step further and referred to the matter as a "joke". This is the Premier, this is the Labor Party that is supposed to stand behind the principle of electoral change, and now when we are dealing with the most fundamental principle of democracy - letting people have a direct say on the affairs that affect their lives - he refers to that concept as "lunacy" and as a "joke".

Members on this side do not; we take this very seriously. We have already indicated that, at the end of the day, we will abide by whatever comes out of the sausage machine in the form of the referendum and we will accept the people's verdict. We are not pushing reform. The minister asked what is our proposal. We are not putting forward a proposal; the Government has put forward this proposal.

Mr McGinty: The truth is out - the Liberal Party does not have a policy on the biggest issue facing rural Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN: The Government has six more members on that side than there are on this side of the House and, as a result, we are not in government. This is the Government's proposal and members opposite must face the consequences of it. If they genuinely believe in the principles that they have spouted on about for five years, they will agree to put this matter to a referendum. It is time for country members opposite to put their money where their mouth is. They will make their decision by sitting on one side of the Chamber later today - unless there is some careful manipulation in the meantime. I hope we will have an honest vote on this at some stage, and I hope those country members opposite will demonstrate their commitment to their communities, stand up and be counted and allow the people of Western Australia to have a say. We should trust the people and let them have their say in a referendum.

MR EDWARDS (Greenough) [4.53 pm]: I stand before this House as a country member of Parliament. This is a constitutional issue and it should be decided by referendum. I represent people who have been doing it hard over the past two to three months. It may be provocative to say this, but it is hard to find many country members opposite.

I see this as a matter of the people's choice. This change to electoral boundaries is nothing more than an out-and-out cynical and, perhaps, hypocritical grab for power by the Government. It flies in the face of fair and equitable representation. I have not had one approach from my constituents or from people living in the metropolitan area demanding this change to their representation. That begs the question. The people are not looking for change. In fact, I believe city communities have shown that they support the current situation. A Westpoll survey - undertaken by *The West Australian* - proved they were sympathetic to the situation in which

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country people find themselves and support the established ratio of country representation. This measure is a product of the Labor Party's attempts to load the city vote.

I have collated the statistics relating to six rural electorates and six metropolitan electorates. I present them as comparisons. The electorate of Ningaloo covers an area of 437 927 square kilometres and has 13 local government authorities within its boundaries; the electorate of Rockingham covers 48 square kilometres and has one local government authority; the electorate of Wagin covers 23 121 square kilometres and has 13 local government authorities; the electorate of Nollamara covers 23 square kilometres and has one local government authority; the electorate of Pilbara covers 872 891 square kilometres and has six local government authorities; the electorate of South Perth covers a mere 28 square kilometres and also has one local government authority; the electorate of Merredin covers 65 774 square kilometres and has 19 local government authorities; the electorate of Joondalup covers 34 square kilometres and has one local government authority; the electorate of Greenough covers 31 979 square kilometres and has seven local government authorities; the electorate of Hillarys covers 25 square kilometres and has one local government authority; the electorate of Moore covers 40 657 square kilometres and has 11 local government authorities; and the electorate of Alfred Cove covers 28 square kilometres and has one local government authority. I present those comparisons because those of us who represent country seats must cover an enormous area to service our electors.

It is an old, hackneyed phrase, but the adage of, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" rings true. I feel passionate about this issue. If any one issue is designed to divide country people from their city counterparts, this is it. This will take away their representation.

MR McGINTY (Fremantle - Attorney General) [4.58 pm]: We have just heard a perfect case being made for why the Liberal Party is in opposition in this State. We have just heard the Liberal Party's view of the people of this State. We have heard that, in the eyes of the Liberal Party, people are not equal. Apparently, they are not in any sense equal, nor should they be regarded as such. We have heard the argument that members opposite want to continue to discriminate against some people in this State. They have gone further and said that one's place of residence determines one's political clout.

Several members interjected.

Mr McGINTY: Members opposite are saying that the people of Western Australia are not equal and they should not be regarded as such. Where people live determines their say in the government of this State. Those who live in the country are guaranteed twice the power in determining which party should govern this State. That is the gist of the current legislation and members opposite are propping it up. They are propping up the notion of inequality. They do not believe that the people are equal, but they do believe that they were born to rule and that that approach should be maintained. That is why they are in opposition, and long may that remain the case.

There were two very interesting omissions from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's contribution. First, the Liberal Party does not have a view on this matter; it does not have a policy or position to put to the people of this State. What an amazing position to be in on what members opposite say is the biggest issue facing country Western Australia. It is the most fundamental issue and it goes to the integrity of our system of government, but members opposite do not have a position on it.

Several members interjected.

Mr McGINTY: Members opposite do not have position on electoral reform.

We listened carefully to the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Did he have a view about what should be put to a referendum? No, he said that whatever "it" was should be put to a referendum. What do members opposite want to put to the referendum - the principle of one vote, one value? Do they want to put a particular proposition in the form in which this legislation is now cast? Should the Legislative Council be reformed so that every one can have an equal say? Do members opposite want a referendum on whether we should have pure equality in this State or whether it should be adapted to suit circumstance? Do they want a referendum on whether we have a constitutional provision that would therefore be entrenched in the Constitution or do they want a referendum on a new electoral Act? What do they want to do? Given that members opposite do not have a position, they probably do not know on what they want to hold a referendum.

Mr Barnett: Have a referendum to form the question. Form a drafting committee.

Mr McGINTY: Do members opposite know how the provisions relating to referendums were put in the Constitution? In 1978 without a referendum, Charles Court passed a law by simple majority to insert into the Constitution Act that if anyone wanted to change provisions in the Constitution, they must hold a referendum of the people of this State. What did he entrench by a simple vote of the Parliament without reference to the people members are now indicating are their Holy Grail? He entrenched all his great conservative institutions. Section

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73 of the Constitution provides that any Bill that expressly or impliedly provides for the abolition or alteration to the office of Governor must go to a referendum of the people. He did not go to the people to ask whether they wanted to entrench it so that it could be altered or taken out in future by referendum. It was a simple Act of Parliament. Sir Charles Court entrenched in the Constitution every other conservative institution in this State by providing that a referendum must be held to change anything. He did not hold a referendum to place that onerous requirement on the Parliament and the people of this State.

Mr Barnett: He believed in people having a say.

Mr McGINTY: He believed that for his great conservative institutions -

Mr Barnett: On important issues he gave the people a say on government. He enshrined the right for people to have a say. What is wrong with that? Instead of your grotty little Labor stand -

Mr McGINTY: Come in spinner. He did not ensure that the matter before the House would require a referendum.

Mr Barnett: Members in the Labor Party hate democracy.

The SPEAKER: Order! During that last outburst I could not hear what the minister was saying. If members want the debate to continue, they should refrain from making this level of noise.

Mr McGINTY: Sir Charles Court wrote a provision into the Constitution Act requiring a referendum in certain circumstances to protect his much-cherished conservative institutions such as the office of Governor because he feared there were rampant republicans in the community. What a shame. However, he did not insist that the issue require a referendum because he did not regard that as sufficiently important to warrant it. He regarded only those great conservative matters as important, such as the office of Governor and a reduction in the number of members in the Legislative Council.

Mr Barnett: What year did he do that?

Mr McGINTY: It was in 1978.

Mr Barnett: He took that action 88 years after the Constitution of this State was formed.

Mr McGINTY: Is the Leader of the Opposition trying to make a profound point?

Mr Barnett: He took that action after 88 years of constitutional democracy in this State quite properly so that change would be considered by the people.

Mr McGINTY: He was afraid that the republican issue would become a real issue and his love of the monarchy and all matters conservative in this State were under threat. He did not bother to hold a referendum on this matter. We must appreciate the significance of the referendum provisions in the Constitution, which were inserted by a simple majority of Sir Charles Court's Government in 1978. They were inserted for a purpose and do not include the matter before the House because he did not think it was important enough.

I refer to the legislation before this House. The member for Mitchell knows that he has seriously misrepresented the background to all these matters, because he has not been honest in this matter.

The Labor Party policy is one vote, one value; that is, every citizen is equal.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr McGINTY: No. That is the point I am about to make, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to listen. It was imposed on us by the Greens.

Several members interjected.

Mr Barnett: So the Greens are running the show are they?

Mr McGINTY: They are indeed. Even though the Leader of the Opposition is making a lot of noise on the front bench playing up to the back bench, people may be interested to know what occurred. Over the past five months since the election I have spoken with the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy, briefed them on our ideas, given them maps and invited input from them. I met most of the National Party members and had discussions with the Greens.

Dr Woollard: What about the Independents?

Mr McGINTY: I am sorry, I forgot about the Independents. I say mea culpa.

Mr Waldron interjected.

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Mr McGINTY: The member for Wagin is probably right. The other party we neglected was One Nation. We consulted extensively with the Greens because they went to the election with a policy of change to the electoral system that referred to proportional representation in the Legislative Assembly and the principle of one vote, one value. We negotiated with the Greens on many occasions on the basis of the same offer we extended to everybody here, with the exception of the Independents, and we discussed the limits of what they would or would not accept. This legislation reflects that.

The first concession the Greens required of us, which we were not happy about, concerned the very large electorates in this State. I said that the principle was equality and electoral systems should not be based on acres and trees, as members have heard before; they should be based on people. People are the fundamental core on which we base any democratic system. "Democracy" literally translated from Greek means representation of the people. It is not about economic interest or things of that nature. I told the Greens that I did not want to introduce a system like that in Queensland where the remote, very large electorates in the north west of Queensland - there are five out of I think 87 or 89 seats in the Queensland Parliament - are larger than 100 000 square kilometres. The Greens extracted from us a concession for seats that cover an area greater than 100 000 square kilometres based on the Queensland model.

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Mr McGINTY: I am saying that it was not the Government's desire or policy position to do that. I believed that if it had any prospect of success, I would have happily introduced legislation into this place that would implement the very important premise of every citizen being equal.

Mr Birney: You are not very principled because you are not introducing one vote, one value. Where is your principle?

Mr McGINTY: We made a concession in respect of four or five seats that cover an area greater than 100 000 square kilometres. It will be up to the electoral commission to decide -

Mr Birney interjected.

Mr McGINTY: The member for Kalgoorlie should listen. He asked the question and I am answering it. A concession in respect of those four or five seats that are larger than 100 000 square kilometres was given in the spirit of compromise in trying to meet the needs of different groups. I was prepared to recommend to Cabinet that our legislation incorporate that because the Greens demanded that people in the very remote parts of the State be given consideration.

In the Legislative Council - members opposite know this, because I put the same proposition to both the National Party and the Liberal Party - a range of models were being looked at and ways in which we could implement one vote, one value in the Legislative Council. Configurations were considered that involved three regions, five regions, six regions and seven regions. I am not keen to have an increase in the number of members in the Legislative Council, and I have made that clear in discussions with the Liberal Party and the Greens (WA). The Greens said that they wanted a situation in which two principles applied in the Legislative Council. I rejected those principles. I did not think they were principles at all. Firstly, they wanted equal representation in both the country and the city. In other words, we currently have 34 members, and they wanted 17 country members and 17 city members - a 50-50 arrangement. Secondly, they wanted to increase the number of members in the Legislative Council by two, so that the six regions would be equally represented and would each have six legislative councillors. I was not prepared to accept that, but that was the way in which the Greens set out to look after country people.

Mr Pandal: What were your grounds for rejecting that principle?

Mr McGINTY: The first ground was that the State should not have to bear the cost of increasing the number of legislative councillors. The second ground was that the notion that each region would be represented equally would increase the malapportionment between, for instance, the Mining and Pastoral Region and the North Metropolitan Region, and I was not interested in adding to the number of legislative councillors if that would not reduce the malapportionment.

Mr Pandal: Was that because it still had a country-city divide?

Mr McGINTY: If we considered the North Metropolitan Region and the Mining and Pastoral Region as being the two extremes at the moment, and if we added one member to the Mining and Pastoral Region and took one member out of the North Metropolitan Region, we would increase the malapportionment. However, most significantly, it made no progress toward the principle that I regard as important, and that the Greens denied with regard to the upper House; namely, that all citizens should have equal representation, regardless of where they live. The Greens argued that country people should be given weighting in the Legislative Council but not in the

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Legislative Assembly. That offended the principles on which I was basing my proposal. That is the background to this matter.

Let us be clear about who was supporting which proposal. If I could have convinced 17 members of the Legislative Council - we already have 12 Labor votes there, so we need five more to support pure one vote, one value legislation - then I would have brought that legislation into this House.

Mr Birney: You have 17 votes in the Legislative Council with the Greens' votes.

Mr McGINTY: No. They will support us on the principle of one vote, one value only if we make a concession with regard to the remote areas in the Legislative Assembly and a total concession with regard to the Legislative Council; so we did not make any concessions. I could have introduced one vote, one value legislation and gone down in glorious defeat, but that is not what I am about. I am about achieving and making things happen. That is why the legislation is cast in this way.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: So you did a backroom deal rather than bring it into the Parliament.

Mr McGINTY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has dealt himself out of playing cards in the backroom, because he does not even have a position on the matter. I cannot even talk to him sensibly because all he wants to do is knock. He is not happy about this and he is not happy about that, but he is not prepared to take a position on this matter.

To summarise the position we reached with the negotiations, I wanted equality; that is a principle I have campaigned on and that the Labor Party stands for. We were able to get damn close to it with regard to the Legislative Assembly, but we were not able to get within cooee of it in the Legislative Council. Therefore, if carried, this legislation will take a historic step forward. However, it does not go as far as I would like it to go. That is essentially the proposition.

Mr Birney: Will the Greens vote for your legislation?

Mr McGINTY: They have said that they are happy with the configuration in the Legislative Assembly, but they have not indicated that they will support the legislation.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr McGINTY: I wish!

Mr Omodei: You should have a good old chuckle.

Mr McGINTY: This is a serious matter. The member for Warren-Blackwood said that it is the most important issue affecting country Western Australia. I say it is the most important issue affecting the integrity of our system of government. That is why, member for Warren-Blackwood, I will not have a chuckle about it.

Mr Omodei: What is so special about the upper House? What is so special about local government? Why is it that only the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia -

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Mr McGINTY: I said before that the Liberals do not have a position on this. They have had varying positions over time, and I would like to refer to some of them, even though today they do not have a position.

Mr Day: You are misrepresenting the situation.

Mr McGINTY: No I am not. I will read out the statement; it is in the Liberal Party's own words. In November 1995, following the High Court case that challenged the electoral laws in this State, and in the lead-up to the election that occurred 12 months later, the then leader of Liberal Party, Richard Court, and the then Leader of the National Party, Hendy Cowan, took a proposition to the joint-party room. I will quote two paragraphs from the media statement that was issued when the National and Liberal Parties supported one vote, one value in the Legislative Assembly. It states -

“However, the Coalition parties have publicly acknowledged that a readjustment of the current level of weighting between the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in the Legislative Assembly will occur as our electoral system evolves.

“In principle, agreement has been reached on a system which would divide the State's electoral enrolment by 57 and allow for a variation of plus or minus 20 per cent.

That was the position of the National and Liberal Parties: one vote, one value, but with a little more tolerance than the national standard, which is 10 per cent; just allow 20 per cent and it was a deal. That media statement was issued before the 1996 election, under the names of the leaders of the two coalition parties. Richard Court

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and Hendy Cowan supported one vote, one value prior to the 1996 election, provided it had a variance of 20 per cent. If the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to support that proposition now, we will do business with him. He can move it as an amendment, and we will support it. I know he will not do that, although that is what he said then.

Mr Day: You were very quiet on that issue in the last term of government.

Mr McGINTY: I had just argued in the High Court that the State's laws were invalid. Yes, I was very quiet about that!

Many crocodile tears have been shed in this place over the past week about country representation. The point has already been made that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to abolish the upper House and take 17 seats out of country regions.

Mr Barnett: Since you have raised that matter, and since you have the article, can you quote where I said that?

Mr McGINTY: The leading paragraph in *The Australian* states -

Deputy Liberal leader Colin Barnett wants to abolish the West Australian upper house if he succeeds Richard Court as premier after next year's State election.

Mr Barnett: Can you find in that article a quote where I said that? The point is that I know exactly what I said to Matt Price in that interview, and it was not that.

Mr McGINTY: Does the Leader of the National Party also want to abolish the upper House, because recently he said on radio that he strongly supported the abolition of the upper House, and his words were clearly recorded? The Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party both want to take 17 seats out of regional Western Australia -

Mr Barnett: Neither you nor the Premier has produced a quote in which I have advocated, at any stage in my political career, the abolition of the upper House.

Mr McGINTY: I know that is the view of the Leader of the Opposition, as does everyone here. Is he saying that that is not his view?

Mr Barnett: I know exactly what I said in that interview.

Mr McGINTY: The Leader of the Opposition's view is well known; he cannot have secrets in a little Chamber of 57 people. We know what he is thinking.

Mr Barnett: The context of the interview was about the operation of Parliament. I made the observation that in a federal system, one of the big constraints of the Western Australian Parliament having a bicameral system was that we had two very small Chambers and that made it difficult for the operation of committee and other systems. That is what the interview was about and that is the reality of the view I hold today. There is a problem with a bicameral system when there are small Chambers.

Mr McGINTY: The member for Avon supports the view of the Leader of the Opposition that the upper House should be abolished. Both are now crying crocodile tears about the reduction of the seats in regional areas, when they wanted to take more seats out of the regional areas than this legislation will achieve.

Mr Masters: The Attorney General should return to the subject.

Mr McGINTY: I am attempting to ascertain whether the Leader of the Opposition has a position. I know he has one there somewhere. That was the position on the abolition of the Legislative Council, held by both the National Party and the Liberal Party since 1995.

What does Wilson Tuckey, a man for whom I have great admiration, have to say about all this? He suggests that all members representing country seats are lazy. They are featherbedding themselves. They would not know an honest day's work if they fell over it.

Mr Graham: He did not say that when he was in Port Hedland. He said just about the opposite, possibly because he was on the public stump up there. He was arguing against that proposition. He was having two bob each way.

Mr McGINTY: He may well have had two bob each way, but I like the views that he is expressing here. Mr Tuckey says that it is blatant featherbedding of politicians' jobs for the Opposition to argue that electorates in Western Australia should have only 21 000 electors. He points out that he represents 80 000 people, and New South Wales state electorates each have 40 000. He obviously was not aware that some Western Australian electorates have only 9 000 or 10 000 people. He would suffer apoplexy if he knew. I will quote from his press release -

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“With modern technology and the increase in representations via the internet, the size of a State electorate should be 30 000 voters and membership of the Legislative Assembly should be reduced to a commensurate level. This would result in considerable reductions in the cost of running Parliament.

Such a move would also better represent country people on the floor of the Parliament, which is what really counts but again it is ignored by State MP’s” . . .

He concludes his statement with this -

“No State Parliament should have electorates as small as 21 000 constituents. That is horse and buggy days” . . .

Good on you, Wilson! He has hit the nail on the head. We are realising that those who are complaining loudest will now have to do an honest day’s work, when they actually have 21 000 people to represent. Wilson Tuckey does not even think that is enough to keep a member fully occupied for eight hours a day.

I also read with some interest a media release from the Australian Democrats on 7 August. Senator Andrew Murray spoke of the Bill he will introduce into the Senate to override state laws and require one vote, one value in both Houses of the Western Australian Parliament. The federal Government clearly has the power to do that, and Andrew Murray is stating the principle. His press release reads -

Australian Democrats’ Senator for Western Australia, Andrew Murray today in the Senate described Western Australia’s electoral system as a ‘study in inequality’ as he tabled a Private Senator’s Bill that proposes the one vote one value principle must be observed in State and Territory elections . . .

“Western Australia’s electoral system is a study in inequality. In the Legislative Assembly, non-metropolitan electorates account for 26 per cent of voters but over 40 percent of the seats. There are 17,283 voters in the Mitchell electorate but 9415 voters in the Eyre electorate. That is, a vote in Eyre counts for nearly twice that of a vote in Mitchell,” Senator Murray said.

In the Upper House the malapportionment is even more pronounced. The average number of voters per member in the Mining and Pastoral Region is 13,380. In the East Metropolitan Region, that figure is 53,509. The vote of a person in the Mining and Pastoral Region is worth nearly *four times* that of an East Metropolitan voter!

“This is an affront to democracy. It offends the basic one vote one value principle.

“Eight out of Australia’s nine legislatures broadly comply with the one vote one value principle. If one vote one value is good enough for the eight other legislatures and their political parties, why is it not good enough for Western Australia?”

This is a great statement of principle.

The Leader of the Opposition says that he never said that he wanted to see a House of this Parliament abolished. I refer to page 7690 of *Hansard* of Thursday, 15 June 2000 -

Mr BARNETT: I have always said that I would be very happy to abolish this House as long as we ended up with one.

Mr Barnett: I do believe that, in the long term, the Western Australian Parliament would be better served by having one large Chamber. The Attorney General can talk about abolishing the upper House or the lower House, but my gut feeling is that in 30 years, if the Western Australian Parliament and the State Government survive - that is an issue in itself - there will be one Chamber, probably with the same number of members as the two together now have. That will be the reality in a federal system. It is not a matter of abolishing the upper House or the lower House; it is about realising that this Parliament will need to be modern, and move with the times.

The SPEAKER: The member for Warren-Blackwood!

Mr McGINTY: I will deal with the question of referendums. This motion calls for a referendum to be conducted - on what I am not sure, but it does call for a referendum. In Australia, since the first referendum under the provisions of section 128 of the Australian Constitution was held in 1906, 44 referendums have been put to the Australian people. Eight of those have been carried, including three on one day during the term of the Fraser Liberal Government. Referendums have a history of being defeated in this country. That is the reason that this motion has been moved. No referendums have been passed under the provisions of the Western Australian Constitution.

Mr Kobelke: The secession referendum in the 1930s was carried.

Mr McGINTY: I think that referendum in fact was a commonwealth referendum.

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Mr Kobelke: No, it was a state referendum.

Mr McGINTY: It was passed, but never acted upon.

The reason a referendum has been proposed is that it is a simple ruse, because people know that, at referendums, unless there is unanimity from all of the players in the political process, the referendum will be defeated. That is not an adverse reflection on the intelligence of the people of Australia to make up their mind on particular issues. It recognises that, at referendums, the Australian people take into account a vast variety of factors, many of which have nothing to do with the essential merits of the proposition. I can refer anyone who doubts that to a research paper prepared for the commonwealth Parliament two years ago headed "Constitutional referenda in Australia". It was prepared in 1999, in the lead-up to the referendum on whether Australia should become a republic.

The idea that the Australian people will support any proposition that has any merit is horribly mistaken because of the complexity of the issues and the understanding that Australian people have of a lot of broader issues involved in their processes. I will provide three examples from one of the most recent referendums held in this country. In 1988, the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, put to the Australian people a series of questions to amend the Constitution. Most of them were fairly innocuous, but were vigorously opposed by the then Opposition. One of the questions that was posed to the Australian people was whether the Constitution should be amended to enshrine the principle of religious freedom. Does anyone here object to the principle of freedom of religion?

Mr Barnett: People objected to the question. They already had religious freedom, and the question was unnecessary.

Mr McGINTY: The people voted against enshrining religious freedom in the Constitution. That was not all. In Australia we have three tiers of government, two of which are recognised in the Constitution - the Commonwealth and State Governments - but the Constitution does not recognise local government. The proposition was put that local government should be recognised in the Constitution as the third tier of government in Australia.

Mr Pandal: Given its performance in my electorate, it should not be recognised!

Mr McGINTY: The member for South Perth is one person who thinks that local government should not be recognised! I doubt that there would be anyone else in the House who, looking at that as a proposition in its own right, would vote against it. Yet the Australian people rejected it. They replied with a resounding no to the question of whether we should recognise local government.

When the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquires property, the Commonwealth Constitution requires it to compensate the person on just terms. State Governments are not required to pay compensation when they compulsorily acquire people's property. That referendum asked if a provision should be inserted into the Australian Constitution to require the States to pay compensation on just terms. No-one would disagree with that, but the Australian people said no, they did not want that.

Mr Masters: Why?

Mr McGINTY: The issues at stake in a referendum - and I say this without disrespect for the Australian people - invariably involve whether people like a person and what they think of other issues. People consider a variety of issues that have nothing to do with the essential merit of the proposition.

Mr Graham: Isn't there a rule that for a constitutional referendum to be passed, a majority of voters in a majority of States is also required? That is pretty significant.

Mr McGINTY: Yes; and some referendums in which a majority of votes have been attained were defeated because they did not achieve the support of a majority of States.

Mr Graham: The vast bulk of referendums have failed because of the second provision; that is, a majority of Australian voters have voted yes, but a majority of States have voted no.

Mr McGINTY: I know the member is a neo-Cromwellian constitutional scholar, which is something I have always respected about him. However, I refer to a commonwealth parliamentary library research paper, which shows, on page 4, that although a significant number of referendums have been defeated for the very reason the member has given, a great number have also been defeated because they failed to achieve 50 per cent of the total vote.

Mr Graham: I will look at the paper and, if it will keep the minister happy, I will become a neo-constitutional scholar.

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Mr McGINTY: We all know that a vague call by one side for a referendum when it does not have a position is a ruse. It is a con designed to ensure that no change takes place. That is what it is all about, and it is not very sophisticated. It is dressed up as consultation with the public, but we all know that it is a ruse to ensure that nothing changes. Unfortunately, that is the history of referendums in Western Australia. The Labor Party is committed to change based on principle. The principle in this instance is a question of equality, and I hope that we can persuade members of Parliament in both Houses that it is a principle worth supporting. That is what we are about in pursuing this matter. We will not be sidetracked into a populist line which has the one objective of ensuring that nothing changes. That is not what we are about as a political party. I hope we can garner the support of other people in this Parliament to ensure progressive change based on principle to give integrity to our system of government, as was recommended by the Commission on Government and the royal commission and as applies in every other Parliament in Australia and throughout the western world. We are the odd Parliament out. The situation in the Legislative Council means that after this legislation goes through, we will still be the only Parliament in Australia that does not acknowledge the crucial principle of equality.

We do not support the motion. It is a populist stunt, and I hope that I have been able to cover the range of issues behind it. As a Parliament, we need to decide issues. If referendums and consultation with the public are such an important part of the Liberal Party's political credo, why did it not hold a referendum during any of the eight years in which it was in government? It did not do so because it knew what would happen. It knew a referendum would be defeated. It made some very radical changes to the make-up of this State. It rammed them through the Parliament knowing full well it was about to lose its majority in the Legislative Council. It was opportunistic and rammed through fundamental changes. There was no talk of consultation with the people.

Mr Day: Under what circumstances do you support a referendum?

Mr McGINTY: If one wanted a constitution in which a State's principles were entrenched, and that could be altered only by referendum, as it is with the Commonwealth Constitution, it must be taken to the people in the first place. I have spoken about the problem. It comes back to the Sir Charles Court story. The existing narrow-based referendum requirements of the state Constitution have no legitimacy because they were inserted by a simple Act of Parliament with a simple majority. No referendum was held; there was no consultation with the people. That is why the Commonwealth Constitution has integrity: it was adopted by the Australian people through a referendum and can be changed only by referendum. It is fatuous for people to start saying that we should not do things in this State without a referendum because those things might be inconvenient or too radical for some people and threaten existing power bases.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: Why have you changed your point of view, or do you disagree with the Premier?

Mr McGINTY: I do not disagree with the Premier at all. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition misrepresented the Premier's position by saying that he argued that there should be a referendum on the question of one vote, one value. He did not say that, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows he did not say that. He cannot point to a time and place when the Premier argued for a referendum on one vote, one value.

Mr Barron-Sullivan: He said that the matter should be enshrined in the Constitution.

Mr McGINTY: The member is twisting it. We know he is a marketing man, and that he has no substance. He is in it only for the flash, populist quick fix. He is trying to sell something. That is all he is doing. It is just a big, populist stunt.

I return to the question of a mandate, which is crucial.

Mr Board: I think you demean the referendum process.

Mr McGINTY: The member demeans the principle of equality.

Mr Masters: You corrupt equality.

Mr McGINTY: How is that? Do I corrupt the system of equality by saying that everyone should be equal in the determination of government and before the law? It is a good try, but I simply do not accept that.

We have a mandate for this change because the Australian Labor Party has for 100 years stood for the principle of electoral equality and one person, one vote. We originally argued for it in the goldfields when the political predecessors of members opposite supported malapportionment that denied equal representation for the rapidly growing goldfields area. We campaigned for that over 100 years ago. The first electoral reform legislation based on the principle of electoral equality was introduced into this Parliament by a Labor Government in 1913, but the conservatives in the upper House defeated it then, as they have done on dozens of occasions since. The people opposite and their supporters have campaigned bitterly. I remember the advertisements on Golden West

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Network television. Do the country members remember them? Those ads said the Labor Party was machine-gunning down country voters. It was a scare campaign initiated by members opposite. It did not work.

Mr Ainsworth: Were those ads broadcast on the city television stations?

Mr McGINTY: No.

Mr Ainsworth: The majority of people did not see those ads.

Mr McGINTY: The Labor Party won a record majority of seats to come into government. People said that winning 11 seats would be too hard. We won more than that. Further, our regional representation in this Parliament is the greatest we have had for a long time. Regional people did not buy the scare campaign of members opposite at the election; they will not buy this ruse of a referendum. People know it is a con job. We have a burgeoning and talented Labor side, many of whom represent regional Western Australia. They want one vote, one value. They do not want the issue to be deferred.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [5.38 pm]: One vote, one value is Labor Party policy. It says it bases its policy on people. What humbug! What bunkum from the Australian Labor Party. What baloney from the Government. What hoey from the Minister for Electoral Affairs. What rubbish from the Minister for Peel and the South West. What bull, what flim-flam, what hogwash. This is nothing more than an attempt by a morally corrupt Government to cement its hold on power. It is nothing more and nothing less. The issue of one vote, one value is a deliberate mechanism designed to hide the real truth; that is, this Government is trying to confuse process with outcome. I shall explain what I mean by that.

The principle of one vote, one value is a wonderful, highly desirable principle. It is the same type of principle that is enshrined in communism, socialism, the claim that no child would live in poverty by the year 1990, and so on. However, in the real world, principles almost always give way to pragmatism and realistic, desirable outcomes. For example, the type of socialism espoused by Marx and Lenin 100 years ago has changed so much in the past 30 to 40 years that every socialist party around the world, with the possible exceptions of Zimbabwe and Cuba, now espouses and supports most of the principles of capitalism that we see in the so-called western countries. The same applies to the state ALP in Western Australia and the federal Labor Party. They have modified and changed the principles of socialism to ensure that the outcome is the best outcome for the people. I am not talking about process; I am talking about outcome.

The Minister for Electoral Affairs interjected at one stage with the word "equality" when the member for Mitchell was speaking. I have been accused of many things in my day but the term I once had thrown my way, and welcomed with open arms, was the accusation that I was egalitarian. The person who described me in that way intended it to be the biggest insult he could throw at me.

Mr Kobelke: Was he a Liberal?

Mr MASTERS: Yes, he was a Liberal but not a paid-up party member. He was mighty upset when I thanked him for that insult.

Egalitarianism places everyone on an equal footing, not so that they have equal opportunity but that the outcome of egalitarianism is orchestrated, manufactured, controlled and contrived so that the maximum number of people gain the maximum possible benefit of its outcomes. The ALP and the current federal Liberal Government both accept that equality of process is not as important as equality of outcome. One example is Aboriginal health. I imagine every political party in Australia - possibly with the exception of One Nation - would agree that the state of Aboriginal health in Australia is so deplorable that increased funding in the form of far more dollars per head must be spent on the Aboriginal population in Australia than on non-Aboriginal people.

I challenge members in this place: do they object to a distortion of the principle of equality of process whereby in theory there is no discrimination in funding levels for health across the Australian population? The reality is that every political party and most members of Parliament would agree that there must be positive discrimination to ensure that the terrible issue of Aboriginal health is addressed properly. Every member agrees that we must ensure an equality of outcome. We will happily corrupt the process and the principles to ensure that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians have the same health outcomes and the same high health standards that we all want.

I repeat that it is equality of process that the Labor Party is talking about. Whether that process affects Aboriginal health or government education in low socioeconomic areas, public housing or the removal of vote weighting, the equality of process is far less important than the equality of outcome. The Government today is trying to blind us to the truth that outcome is more important than process.

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I strongly support the principle of one vote, one value provided that it achieves equality of outcome. However, in a State like Western Australia, that simply is not possible. We cannot achieve equality of outcome in Western Australia if we have an equality of process that applies to all Western Australians. There are too many problems in trying equally or fairly to represent all people in a State like Western Australia. On that basis, I have no choice but to reject the principle of one vote, one value in exchange for electoral weighting in rural WA to achieve the equality of outcome that I have been discussing.

I need to educate some Labor members of Parliament, most of whom come from metropolitan Perth, about the realities of this State of Western Australia. Point number one is that the wealth that is so enjoyed by all of us in Perth is created for the most part in rural, non-metropolitan Western Australia.

Mr Hyde: It's all in the central business district. Where does the finance come from? Where are the headquarters? They are in the CBD.

Mr MASTERS: I am happy to respond to that interjection. The financial wealth that the member for Perth is talking about is a manipulation of the wealth that is created in rural Western Australia. The mining industry creates exports worth \$24 billion and there is an internal generation of dollars many times greater than that and many times greater than the so-called wealth created by the financial sector. Last year, if my memory is correct, agriculture in Western Australia created an export income of \$12 billion; tourism, I believe, created \$4 billion or \$5 billion; and let us not forget forestry, fishing and a range of other rural-based, wealth-creating activities that benefit mainly those of us in Perth, Western Australia.

Mr Hyde: Value-added products in the CBD and the port of Fremantle and financial services.

Mr MASTERS: Again, I am happy to respond to that false interjection because, unfortunately, the reality is that for about the past 40 years we have suffered from a mentality of quarry Australia. We export most of our products in a raw or semi-finished state so that the sort of manufacturing wealth we should be creating has never been capable of being created to the extent we want, regardless of whether the Government of the day was Liberal, Labor or any other Government.

Mr Hyde: So the 600 000 employees in the CBD, you say, do nothing for the economy?

Mr MASTERS: If the people of Western Australia and this Parliament do not clearly understand the simple fact that the wealth of Western Australia is created primarily in rural WA and bounces around internally within Perth, there will be more decisions like the one that, to a large degree, cost the Liberal Party government at the last election and more decisions like no logging of old-growth forests. I will not go into the issue of whether there should be logging of old-growth forests. However, I point out to those members on my left who are laughing that some of the consequences of that decision, made mainly by Perth people, will result in 1 000 or more people put out of work in rural WA. There will be about \$57 million of state government financial support - meaning taxpayers' support - to try to create worthwhile and meaningful jobs for those 1 000 people who are otherwise at risk of being thrown out of work. There is a nice but, I am sorry to say, unrealistic expectation that tourism will somehow expand in south west WA to create the jobs that have been lost through the cessation of old-growth forest logging. I have serious doubts that tourism will expand to that extent.

One fear of rural people is that more of these anti-development decisions will be made by people in Perth because they are not listening to country people who understand where the wealth of this State comes from. Their fear is that more anti-development decisions will be made not only in the next four years of this term of government but also in the following four years when we assume that we will get back into government, and the following 40 years of various Governments with most members of Parliament under the scheme proposed by the current Government coming from Perth rather than a fair weighting of country MPs. Unless we are able to achieve an equality of outcome in country people's representation in Parliament and in government, we, as a society, will suffer significantly in future years. That is the big picture.

The second point I wish to educate certain Labor members about is the small picture. Take my seat of Vasse as an example. A number of people say that members can do a certain amount of work by using their mobile phones while they drive around their electorates. I hope those people will visit my electorate sometime.

Mr Trenorden: And visit mine.

Mr MASTERS: Thank you, member for Avon. I believed the Telstra advertisements of four years ago and I bought a global system for mobile communications digital phone plan. The phone cost me nothing but I had to pay about \$350 for a car kit, \$120 for the first external aerial and another \$120 for a second external aerial to replace the first and about \$150 to install it. They are costs that, for the most part, Perth members of Parliament do not have to consider as they can get by with a \$99 hands-free car kit. Worse than that is the issue of coverage. Less than half of my electorate is covered by the GSM network. When I drive from one end of my electorate to another there are many places where I lose coverage or coverage is interrupted. When I drive to

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Perth on the Old Coast Road - which Telstra states in its brochures is well covered by the GSM network - I lose access to the service at four or five different places. I am trying to put a few myths to rest about mobile phone coverage. When I change my car in a few months time I will change to the code division multiple access network. My purchase of the phone will be free because of the scheme I will be in, but I will, once again, have to spend somewhere in the vicinity of \$600 to get a car kit, aerial and wiring. I would like to see the Perth members, who are not listening to me -

The SPEAKER: Order, members! About 30 different conversations have taken place in the past few minutes. This place sounds more like a cafeteria than a Parliament. If members want to conduct conversations they should leave the House.

Mr MASTERS: One can drive from one end to the other of a small country electorate like Vasse in a bit over one hour when travelling at about 110 kilometres an hour. It takes a little less time at higher speeds. The electorate is about 2 000 square kilometres. It might be all right for Perth members of Parliament on holiday to visit my electorate once or twice a year, but for someone like myself who has to work in that geographical area, it is difficult. A round trip to Perth is about 500 kilometres and takes me about five hours. It is not a problem when I attend Parliament because I am in Perth for three days at a time, but when I need to come to Perth to meet one person from one government agency or one constituent who has an issue and cannot get down to see me, five hours driving plus the meeting time and a little bit of time for lunch takes up a full day. The day has gone and I have done only one job.

I repeat my belief that one vote, one value is nothing more than a cynical attempt by the Labor Government to cement its electoral position in Western Australia. The so-called principles of one vote, one value and equality of electoral voting power are sheer humbug. They are not to be believed by the intelligent, concerned, compassionate citizens of this State. As an absolute minimum, a referendum is needed and I challenge the Government to go the whole hog and adopt the Swiss model of citizen-initiated referendums. That is another issue that can be discussed at another time. The Minister for Electoral Affairs challenged the Opposition to state its model. I have a simple response: let us redistribute our boundaries under the existing electoral rules. Country weighting will be maintained, large city electorates like Wanneroo will be split into two, as appropriate, and one north west seat will be removed because of a drop in population and may be relocated to the south west. Under the existing electoral rules in Western Australia, there would be significant electoral change, and that would overcome most of the concerns that the Government is putting forward. If a redistribution occurred on that basis it would achieve the fair and honest result of equality of outcome and not the flawed, false, cynical, hypocritical goal that results from the inequality of process that the Government is supporting for all the wrong reasons.

There is a problem with the principle of one vote, one value. As I said earlier, it is a wonderful principle but as soon as it is accepted that there needs to be a plus or minus one per cent weighting for whatever reason, the principle is corrupted and must be put aside to allow pragmatic decisions to be made. Once the principle is corrupted in the way the Government is suggesting, it ceases to be a principle. Let us all agree on this: one vote, one value is a great principle in theory, but it is unworkable, undesirable and undemocratic in terms of its equality of outcome when attempts are made to put it into practice. The Government should be honest and state publicly that it is happy to corrupt the principle of one vote, one value by agreeing to a plus or minus one per cent, 10 per cent or 20 per cent weighting. Let us accept reality and work for an equality of outcome, not an equality of process.

MR GRAHAM (Pilbara) [5.57 pm]: It is my intention to vote with the Government on this issue because I do not see the need in any way, shape or form for a referendum on this matter. If I were in doubt as to whether a referendum had merit, I would not have been persuaded by the arguments to date. I doubt whether there is a member in either House of this Parliament who is better qualified than I to speak on the task of representing a remote seat in this State. I say that because I have been a backbencher in government, a backbencher in opposition and I have won a seat as an Independent. I have seen the issue from all sides of the political spectrum. I am amazed by the rhetoric of sitting members of Parliament about vote weighting for country people. I have never supported the application of one vote, one value and have argued against it in party rooms. I am sure that Mr Speaker will recall my speech in 1996. Through the amendments made by the Greens, I have had a partial win, although I am not sure how much of a win I have had. When what were known as the George Strickland amendments were proposed in 1996, I spoke against them. I said at the time that no thinking person could argue against the principle of equality of voting. It is not reasonable to argue that someone's vote should have advantage over someone else's unless there are practical and pragmatic reasons that it should be thus.

Mr Masters: There is a difference between principle and pragmatism.

Mr GRAHAM: Absolutely. That is the nature of politics. The nature of politics is to corrupt principles for political outcomes. I do not know why people pretend. It is indisputable if we are debating one vote, one value

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in both Houses of Parliament; I cannot argue against it. Do I like it? No, I do not. Is it possible to mount an argument against it? No, it is not. The anti-country rhetoric that emanates from city members of Parliament is frightening, and it shows a complete lack of understanding of how our system of government works in country Western Australia. In my view, it is absolute nonsense to have vote weighting in places such as Mandurah, Rockingham, Bunbury and so forth. It is nonsense that the electorate of Mandurah should have half the number of voters as the electorate of Rockingham. Do I need a referendum to know that that should not be the case? No, I do not.

The key question is: what do we mean when we talk about one vote, one value? A while ago the Attorney General raised the question of the Labor Party having a mandate. It does not. He said that the Labor Party has a mandate because for 100 years it has proposed one vote, one value. That is nonsense. A mandate comes from the people, not from party policy. The Labor Party received 37 per cent of the vote. A political party does not have a clear mandate from the people when almost seven out of 10 people vote against it. At least 63 out of 100 voted against the party. They are bookies' odds, not a mandate!

The second point I make about the Attorney General's public rhetoric on these matters relates to his comment that in this age of improved technology there is no reason for vote weighting in country Western Australia. The cost of connecting to the Internet in parts of my electorate is \$27 an hour, which is about five times more than the monthly cost to a city resident. If we are to apportion seats on the basis of improved technology, we could, to be blunt, replace the members in the city with an interactive web site, because it is the city residents who have access to the improved technology. Telstra says that 99 per cent of Australian households have a telephone - I represent the one per cent that does not. That one per cent is as entitled as some flash Harry in the central business district to speak to its member of Parliament, if not more entitled because its need is greater.

The Attorney General in his rhetoric said that 100 years ago in Kalgoorlie the Australian Labor Party argued for one vote, one value. Let us look at the application of that rhetoric. The substance of the Australian Labor Party's case nearly 100 years ago was about giving working people in the growth area of Kalgoorlie equal say with the squatters of the Kimberley, as they were then called. It was about removing entrenched privilege and giving workers a say. This discussion Bill does the exact opposite. The pragmatic effect of this piece of legislation is that some of the poorest and most impoverished people in Western Australia will effectively be disfranchised. Their ability to contact their member of Parliament will be removed if this legislation goes through in the form proposed. When the rhetoric of one vote, one value is applied to the dirt and measured on a map, it means that two members of Parliament will represent almost 48 per cent of Western Australia.

Mr McGowan: What about in the upper House?

Mr GRAHAM: I will deal with the upper House in a moment.

Mr Trenorden: Do you mean with the vote weighting?

Mr GRAHAM: Even with the phoney vote weighting of one person for every 200 square kilometres. From memory, that gives me an extra 4 100 voters. It means that the Murchison, the Gascoyne, the Pilbara and the Kimberley will have two seats, including the seat in the western desert.

Mr McGowan: What is it now?

Mr GRAHAM: Four members of Parliament cover that area. It will effectively decrease the number of members of Parliament in the most remote areas of Western Australia by 50 per cent, bearing in mind that those constituents are the most needy people in this State. There was a time when the Australian Labor Party stood for "advantaging" the most needy people in the community - not disfranchising them.

I now refer to the Mining and Pastoral Region. I said I had a part-win, because my proposal for discussion in 1996 was that a 500-kilometre radius be drawn around Perth and that vote weighting apply outside, but not inside that line. People can argue the merits of any line on a map, whether it be 450 kilometres, 50 or whatever. I chose 500.

Mr Trenorden: How about five?

Mr GRAHAM: Five I will not agree with. How will that apply and what does it mean? I concede that outside a 500-kilometre range there will be vote weighting. The proposal says that for every 200 square kilometres over a certain size a nominal voter will go on the roll, but what will not change? The number of people who are directly elected and accountable to their electorates in the bush will decrease. Those seats will transfer directly to the city.

Why is it that absolutely nothing happens in the Legislative Council? For 80 out of the past 100 years the ALP has had a policy of voting reform and abolishing that House. I support that policy. I still think that should be part and parcel of the Labor Party's policy, because the Legislative Council is a House of entrenched privilege.

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It is nothing more nor less than a House of entrenched privilege that is an abomination of the Westminster system, which has the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It also happens to carry the name forward from the original unelected governing council of Western Australia.

Let us now look at what the Labor Party is seeking to maintain in the Legislative Council. The legislation introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 1996 was called the Strickland Bills, because the person who subsequently became Speaker put them forward for discussion and deliberation. This legislation was put forward by the Greens (WA). How did the Greens fare? Hon Robin Chapple represents the Mining and Pastoral Region, and he is advocating a fair and balanced electoral system. The Western Australian Electoral Commission said that the quota for election to the Legislative Council is 8 691 votes. Robin Chapple polled 1 930 votes out of a possible 53 442. Therefore, the man who is now leading the debate on how remote seats should be organised polled less than four per cent of the vote. In my seat of Pilbara he would not have been elected to the shire council. He received two hundred and something votes in the good seat of Pilbara, and he is at the forefront of the argument for electoral reform! He has no mandate.

I turn now to the gerrymander that exists in the upper House. Out of a possible 53 442 votes - and bearing in mind that a quota for the upper House is 8 691 votes - one person on the Labor Party ticket got 19 726 votes, another person got 45 votes, another person got 110 votes, another person got 48 votes, another person got 54 votes and another person got 46 votes. Which of those persons was elected? The first person who was elected on the Labor Party ticket was Hon Tom Stephens, who got 19 726 votes and is now one of the 17 Labor members in the upper House who will vote to remove votes from country people. The second person who was elected was Hon John Ford, who was No 2 on the Labor Party ticket and got the grand total of 45 votes.

Mr Ainsworth: Popular man!

Mr GRAHAM: Yes. He will do the same! That bloke got 45 votes, and he will vote for electoral reform - one vote, one value! The person who polled the least number of votes on the Labor Party ticket for the Mining and Pastoral Region was the person who was elected to Parliament. Mark Nevill polled 4 252 votes - 100 times more than the number of votes polled by Hon John Ford - yet he was defeated. We are told that we are confronted with one vote, one value legislation. Hon John Fischer from One Nation polled 6 389 votes. He did not achieve the quota, yet he is a member of the Legislative Council. Only two people on the Legislative Council ticket for the Mining and Pastoral Region polled over the quota; nonetheless, that region returned five members. On the Labor Party ticket, the Mining and Pastoral Region returned the person who had achieved the worst result at the poll.

I turn now to members on the other side. Hon Norman Moore polled 13 419 votes, and Greg Smith polled 47 votes. I know that Greg Smith has lodged an appeal, but he beat Hon John Ford by two votes - 47 to 45. If we have a system of voting equality and of one vote, one value, why is Greg Smith not in the Council?

Mr McGowan: Because we do not have a system of one vote, one value.

Mr GRAHAM: Okay, but I am being asked as a member of Parliament to support a package that will introduce one vote, one value and thereby disfranchise my voters, when my voters clearly expressed the view on the Labor Party ticket that the person they did not want was John Ford, yet he is the man who got in. On the opposite side of the ticket, a greater number of voters voted to return Greg Smith, yet he did not get in. Why? That is a fair question.

I do not support and will not support the removal of votes from remote Western Australia. I do support and will support electoral reform. I do not support a referendum. In the overall scheme of things, I happen to agree with the Leader of the Opposition - this will get me into trouble, I know - when he says that this House is severely handicapped by its size. It is a victim of and is crippled by what we could loosely call the talent pool. When we mix up the House between Government and Opposition and take cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries out of the pool, we are not left with a lot to choose from. That is the nature of our system, and I can tell members, as someone who was on the Procedure and Privileges Committee and travelled around to look at other Parliaments, that the general view is that 100 members is about the optimum size to allow a Parliament to have a workable committee system and a system of accountability in which people can scrutinise the Executive without having their careers curtailed if they make a minor criticism of a minister in power. We have never had that and we never will have that under this system.

The Attorney General has said that the Australian Labor Party stands for equality. It does not. It never has and it never will stand for equality. The Australian Labor Party stands for equal opportunity. There is a significant difference between equality and equal opportunity.

Mr Day: Some are more equal than others, no doubt.

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Mr GRAHAM: Yes. In trying to make everything the same - and that will be the effect of the proposed Bill - we will severely disadvantage some regions and some people. I am somewhat bemused by the way in which the Australian Labor Party is building up and pursuing this issue. I am prepared to bet London to a brick that when the time comes for the Premiers Conference, the Premier will not go to the round table in Canberra and say he will accept a cut in funding because this State has a smaller population than New South Wales. No Premier has ever done that, and no Premier ever will.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [6.17 pm]: I will be brief, because I know a number of members, particularly country members, wish to speak on the motion. When this debate started post election and the issue of one vote, one value came into the public arena, I made it clear that I have no argument with the principle of one vote, one value; it is unassailable. However, I have always argued that it is not one vote, one value that we should be talking about. One vote, one value is a basic tenet or principle of democracy. However, it is not the sole principle. That is the point.

I will follow on from the comments made by the member for Pilbara. The way in which one vote, one value has been interpreted in the legislation that will come before this House is very simplistic. It defines one vote, one value as geographic areas that have an equal number of voters. Therefore, one element of one vote, one value in this House is equal-size, single-person electorates. However, in determining whether one person's vote has the same value as another person's vote, we cannot look just at how people are allocated to electorates. We need to look also at our voting system. This country has a preferential voting system. However, under that system, one person's third, fourth or fifth preference can negate, outweigh or cancel another person's first preference. That is certainly not one vote, one value. Why should my fourth preference be able to outweigh another person's first preference? We can have equality in one vote, one value in terms of the number of people in electorates, but that is immediately changed by our system of casting a vote. We then get to our system of counting the votes. That system does not produce one vote, one value either, because, as we have seen, a member of the upper House has been elected with less than four per cent of the vote. It is not just the number of people within geographic boundaries that determines whether one person's vote truly has the same value as another's; it is the number of electors within the boundary of the electorate, the system for casting a vote and the system for counting the votes. Unless all those are true to the principle of one vote, one value, it is not a proper system of one vote, one value. It is a selective use of the principle.

Mr Whitely: What is your solution?

Mr BARNETT: Hang on. I will not argue with the principle of one vote, one value. In fairness, it was an issue during the election campaign. The issue was debated and advertisements were placed, particularly in country areas. It was not an issue for electors in the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area was not a focus of the campaign at all. The reality is that Dr Gallop is the Premier of a Labor Government. However, he has a primary vote of 37 per cent, which is the lowest of any post-war Government. That is a reality. It is hardly a ringing endorsement for change.

The Australian Labor Party's proposal for its version of one vote, one value is to change the balance between metropolitan and country areas. I will confine my comments to this House. This House currently has a distribution that provides 34 seats to city electorates and 23 to those in the country. It is roughly a 60-40 split. What has been proposed is that the distribution would change to 42 and 15. In other words, in a 57-member Chamber, 42 members would represent the city while just 15 would represent the rest of the State. Although it might be argued in a narrow sense that that would deliver one vote, one value, it would produce an unfair result. This Parliament, as a regionally-based State Parliament, would not be doing its job into the future. It is not only country people who are offended by that, but city people as well. No-one from the metropolitan area has come to me to demand more members of Parliament for the city. Country people, fearful of their loss of representation, have certainly approached me. Under the proposed system, of the 57 members in this Chamber, only 15 would have country electorates. When members realise that some of those electorates will be regional centres, which is fair enough, what practical, realistic voice will the people of country Western Australia have in this Parliament? It will be limited. The reason the Government does not want a referendum on this issue is that the historical trend is that it would probably lose. That is the reality. The Government could find that a majority of city people would vote for the Parliament to remain strongly representative of regional, rural and remote Western Australia.

I do not compromise my basic belief in one vote, one value. I will not hide from it or pretend that I do not support that principle. However, my point is that if one vote, one value is applied, this Parliament will not properly represent the interests of this State. In the greater scheme of things, as the years and decades go by, the Parliament will essentially become dysfunctional. If this Parliament cannot represent all the people, regions and

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diversity of a vast State the size of Europe, what role will it have in the future? This Parliament will become city-centric. It will be a Parliament that talks simply about city issues.

The 34 metropolitan members of this House adequately represent the issues of importance to metropolitan Perth. There is no sense within the population of Perth that there is a lack of representation. Sure, there is an imbalance between some city electorates, but that is a redistribution issue. Frankly, if I gain a couple of thousand extra voters in the Cottesloe electorate, that would be neither here nor there. I strongly argue that there should be representation for the Kimberley, Pilbara, goldfields, great southern, south west and wheatbelt. If those regions are not represented on the floor of this House of finance and government, this Parliament in time will become irrelevant. It will become a Parliament of the city. It will not represent the interests of Western Australia.

Bear in mind that this is a bicameral system. That is a different issue. This Parliament is in a federal system. We have a Westminster style of government, with separation between the Legislature, judiciary and executive. The federal system has a separation between State and Commonwealth. The point is that there are enough checks and balances in a bicameral, Westminster-style, federation system of government. Therefore, we can have the luxury of a Parliament that truly represents the size, diversity, economy and social interests of this State.

The Opposition recognises that there is an imbalance. Opposition members do not have their heads in the sand. However, the proposals brought forward by the Labor Government will destroy the long-term function of this Parliament. This Parliament will become a metropolitan Parliament. It will be a system of one vote, one value, but the Parliament will be of less significance and State Governments in the future will decline. I am disappointed that the Attorney General is not here. The Premier also is not here. He is deliberately avoiding this debate, because he knows it is unpopular in not only country Western Australia, but also the metropolitan area. The people of Western Australia want this Parliament to be a forum for all the people, regions and interests of this large and diverse State. I support one vote, one value, but I equally support other principles concerning fair representation and a Parliament that can properly debate, reflect and respect the views and diversity of this State. That is why the Opposition opposes the legislation and calls for a referendum. The Government does not have a mandate to put extra members of Parliament into the metropolitan area. No-one wants that. The Government does not have the mandate to base this Parliament on city interests. The people of this State want diversity. There is a job to be done. I recognise the imbalance. The Government has more work to do. It will get electoral change if it takes the time to do the work and to come up with a model that will attract broad support. Instead of doing that, the Government, through this legislation, has contrived to get behind the State's constitutional arrangements. There is nothing to be proud of in that.

MR MCGOWAN (Rockingham - Parliamentary Secretary) [6.26 pm]: I oppose the Opposition's motion. I will go through my reasons. An election was held in the United States last year. That election in early November caused great embarrassment to the United States, because at the end of the day, the party with the least votes formed government. The party with the most votes did not form government. Al Gore missed out on becoming President even though he received 500 000 more votes than George Bush. The result caused consternation around the world. That example allowed many Governments to take heart. The media and leaders of some totalitarian regimes around the world, such as China and a range of Arab states, widely commented upon this issue. They asked how the United States could lecture them on democracy - a fair, open and just system - when its Government was not elected with a majority.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr MCGOWAN: All that members are doing by interjecting is taking up their own time, because I will speak for the full 20 minutes if they continue. Who wants to speak on this issue? Do the members for Ningaloo or Moore wish to speak on this issue?

Mr McNee interjected.

Mr MCGOWAN: He does. It is up to him. If members want to interject on me, I will continue to talk.

Mr Day: Do you realise that happened here in 1989?

Mr MCGOWAN: I inform the member for Darling Range that the Labor Party attempted to implement a fair system and the Liberal Party did not support it. If it had allowed a fair system to go through this Parliament, it would have won that election. It was the Liberal Party's failure, not the Labor Party's. It is a furphy to continue to bring up that example. Barry MacKinnon would admit that openly.

The Government is trying to come up with a system that provides the greatest opportunity for the majority to form government. Under a preferential system, which has been in place in this country for 100 years, a party would require 50 per cent of the vote plus one to form government. That is what the Government is trying to do;

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that is the central principle of this legislation. A majority should elect a Government, not a minority. I know that glitches occur in the system, as happened in the 1998 federal election when the coalition formed the Government despite the fact that the Beazley-ALP Opposition attracted a majority of the votes.

Several members interjected.

Mr McGOWAN: I am suffering *deja vu*. I will give the member for South Perth the same response I gave to the member for Darling Range; that is, the Labor Party tried to introduce one vote, one value but the conservatives opposed it. The member for South Perth would have been a minister in 1989 if he had supported the Opposition's Bill dealing with this issue. Perhaps he should have crossed the floor then.

Several members interjected.

Mr McGOWAN: I am happy to speak for 20 minutes. Does anyone from the National Party want to speak?

Mr Trenorden: I have been trying to get the call.

Mr McGOWAN: If members keep interjecting, I will speak for 20 minutes.

The Labor Party wants a system that has the greatest prospect of ensuring that the majority elect the Government. That is the system in place in almost all western democracies. It is fair and equitable and that is what we want.

I have cited this example previously in the Chamber, but it is a useful illustration. The member for Mandurah's electorate is 15 minutes travelling time from my electorate. The votes cast in that electorate have double the value of those cast in my electorate. Why should a vote cast in Mandurah have double the value of a Rockingham vote? I am totally perplexed -

Mr Graham: It shouldn't.

Mr McGOWAN: The member is correct; I cannot understand how members opposite can say that the people living in Mandurah and Dawesville suffer any more disadvantage than those living in Rockingham. Yet, under the existing system, votes cast by those who live in Mandurah and Dawesville have double the value of those cast by people who live in my electorate. That is wrong and it offends basic principles of decency, democracy and justice. It is about time we in this Parliament did something about it.

We have a long history of debate about this matter. I refer members to the Commission on Government report of 1995, which clearly states that this system of vote weighting for country electorates should be abolished to create a more accountable Parliament that represents the wishes of the people of the State. I am offended when I hear members such as the member for Vasse say that an area that supposedly creates more wealth should cast votes of greater value. If we were to adopt that principle and take it to its logical conclusion, we would adjust voting power according to how much people earn. According to the Liberal Party's approach, someone who works at the BP refinery at Kwinana as a process operator and who produces enormous wealth for the State should have more voting power than an 18-year-old unemployed person. That is the principle espoused by members opposite. It offends me that they push this wealth argument. People in the city also produce wealth, but it should not determine their voting power. That offends basic principles of democracy. The Liberal Party wants us to adopt the principle that a person's occupation should determine his voting power. Apparently, because a farmer owns tens of thousands of hectares of land, he should have more voting power. Why should someone in my electorate who plays a role in the defence of the nation and who goes away to sea for eight months a year on a warship risking his life not have greater voting power? He might be the captain of a submarine worth \$1 billion. I do not think he should have greater voting power. If members opposite push this argument about wealth and occupation determining the value of votes, why does the highly trained person who steers a submarine, who has huge responsibilities and who lives in my electorate cast a vote that has one-quarter of the value of a vote cast by someone who lives in Kalgoorlie? It is not fair.

The Labor Party adheres to the principle that every vote should have the same value irrespective of what people do for a living or where they live. That is the only fair electoral system. Members can present copious examples of people who do different jobs. I have people in my electorate who earn a fortune and produce great wealth for the State. Why do their votes not have greater value? That is what the member for Vasse is saying. I find that an amazing comment coming from a person who went to university.

Mr Masters interjected.

Mr McGOWAN: I will now refer to the point of this motion, which is that we should have a referendum.

Mr Masters: You are a coward!

Mr McGOWAN: I would like the member to repeat his question.

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Mr Masters: Does the member not agree with the 10 per cent tolerance in vote weighting that the Government's legislation allows? That would introduce this sort of bias.

Dr Gallop: If you want to talk about a pure one vote, one value system, we will happily do that in both Houses of Parliament. Of course, some people in the Liberal Party do not have the guts to face up to the principles that are supposed to underpin their party.

Mr McGOWAN: None of them has the guts to stand up for the basic principles espoused by John Stuart Mill. I am sick of the discombobulated arguments presented by the member for Vasse. I will return to the point of the motion; that is, that we have a referendum on electoral matters. Calling for a referendum is the last act of a desperate man. For the Leader of the Opposition to endorse this call shows how desperate he is. He does not believe it; he said he supports the principle of one vote, one value.

If the public of Western Australia were asked what issues they want put to a referendum, they might include the death penalty in their list. Would members opposite support that? No, they would not. The public might also want a referendum on abortion. If members opposite were committed to public consultation, they would support that.

I refer members to the Notice Paper, which lists the matters scheduled for debate.

Mr Birney: Will you take an interjection?

Mr McGOWAN: Not at the moment. I will finish my point, after which the member can make his point.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill is scheduled for debate. Law and order is a very contentious issue and if the public were consulted they might say they want a referendum to address it. The Gene Technology Bill is also listed and it, too, deals with a controversial subject. Why do we not have a referendum on that? Today we dealt with the Salaries and Allowances Amendment Bill, which deals with politicians' pay. Why not have a referendum on that? We do not, because the people elected us in February to make decisions on these issues. They do not want referenda every week; they want us to deal with these issues.

Mr Birney interjected.

Mr McGOWAN: What is the member's interjection?

Mr Birney: You are talking about referenda and telling us why we should not have them. However, your own Premier wanted a referendum about who elects the Governor. Who cares whether he is appointed by the Premier or the people? Can you answer that in the context of what you are saying?

Mr McGOWAN: I want to get back to the issue of a mandate.

Mr Birney: He wanted a referendum about who appoints the Governor!

Mr McGOWAN: The infantile ramblings of the member for Kalgoorlie do not interest me.

I have referred to many controversial issues, but members opposite are not calling for referenda about them. The Government is trying to come up with a system that provides the greatest opportunity for the majority to form government. Under a preferential system, which has been in place in this country for 100 years, a party would require 50 per cent of the vote plus one to form government.

We had a referendum on this issue - the election that was held on 10 February this year. As has been mentioned, television advertisements were run all around the State on this issue. The former member for Bunbury, Mr Ian Osborne, ran an advertisement in the *South Western Times*, which read -

Under Labor's electoral reform proposals, representation in Parliament for country Western Australia will be slashed . . .

Mr Osborne ran another advertisement in the *South Western Times* on 4 January. It was headed "One vote - what value?" The former member for Bunbury ran his whole advertising campaign on this issue, and he lost his seat! The people of Bunbury read his advertisements and they voted against him. It gets worse for the Opposition. An advertisement headed, "Putting Albany First" was run by the former member for Albany. The first line of his advertisement read -

The Labor Party takes from the country and gives to the City.

He then referred to 23 country seats in the Legislative Assembly. What happened to Mr Prince? He lost the seat of Albany. The people of Albany voted on this issue, and they decided it was not an issue that they cared about. They care about having decent representatives, and a Government that cares about country people and has

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policies they care about. That is what they voted on. They did not fall for any of these furrphies from the Opposition. The people decide these issues.

These matters have been dealt with in every other jurisdiction in Australia. They can be dealt with by adequate resourcing of country members, more offices, more staffing opportunities and so forth. They should not be dealt with by manipulation and unfair treatment of people in the electoral system. They are the principles that the Government wants to enshrine in its electoral reforms.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon - Leader of the National Party) [6.41 pm]: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be involved in this debate. I was concerned that the National Party would not get the call, and I did not want that to happen.

Peter Kennedy stated that the National Party is the only party in the Parliament that has been true to its position.

Dr Gallop: He corrected that.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, he did not. The Labor Party has wanted to get rid of the upper House for 100 years. That has been a part of the Labor Party platform for all of those years. It is interesting that it now runs this argument through the Minister for Electoral Affairs that one vote, one value has been its platform for 100 years. It has always been part of the Labor Party platform to get rid of the upper House.

Dr Gallop: It is not. I was at the Labor Party conference that changed the platform.

Mr TRENORDEN: I have a question for the Premier: when the Attorney General goes overseas next week, who will be the Premier of the State?

Mr McGowan: It won't be you, Max.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is right; it will not be me.

Mr Hyde: What happens when Dexter Davies becomes the member for Merredin? Will you still be Leader of the National Party?

Mr TRENORDEN: I am absolutely terrified!

The National Party preference does not want a change in the electoral system. I wish to make a point to the member for Pilbara. I can do the sums for the urban population in Albany and Bunbury. I do not include Kalgoorlie as it does not count; it has never been anything but very rural and very country.

Dr Gallop: What a stupid comment; it is a major regional centre.

Mr TRENORDEN: Is the Premier saying that Kalgoorlie is not country?

Mr Whitely interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: The member thinks that Roleystone is country. If one counts the seats that are either recognised as cities or close to that position as urban seats, of the 57 seats in this House, only nine seats are in rural or regional areas. That will result in an imbalance in this House.

Several government members interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: I do not have the time that everyone else has had, so I will skip through some of the matters I intended to raise.

Ms McHale: You have the same time as everybody else.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, I do not.

One of the reasons we were annoyed with the minister when he spoke to National Party members in our party room is that with one vote, one value the seats in the wheatbelt will have more electors than metropolitan seats. Under this Bill the wheatbelt seats will have 23 000 voters and the average seat in the metropolitan area will be 21 000 voters. There will be a 10 per cent discrepancy between the number of voters in wheatbelt seats and those in metropolitan area seats.

Dr Gallop: How do you work that out?

Mr TRENORDEN: It is a fact. The Minister for Electoral Affairs has agreed that is the case; that is what happens now. Because the wheatbelt electorates are not growing as fast as city electorates the 10 per cent variation will come into play. The number of voters in the wheatbelt seats will increase by 10 per cent, but in the fast-growing areas like Wanneroo the number will decrease by 10 per cent - which is fair enough. The metropolitan seats will have 90 per cent of the quota, and the wheatbelt seats will have 110 per cent of the quota. That is the current arrangement, and it is also in the Government's Bill. There will not be equality of votes.

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Wheatbelt electorates will have more people than metropolitan seats - in fact, there will be a difference of 20 per cent.

Dr Gallop: No.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is correct; the Premier cannot say “no”.

Dr Gallop: How long will the distribution stay in place?

Mr TRENORDEN: Eight years. There are a lot of angry people in rural WA.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: The member for Perth would not know; he has never been there.

The divide between country and city will increase substantially.

Mr Hyde: Where will the National Party conference be held?

Mr TRENORDEN: For the first time in 10 years it will be held in the metropolitan area. What is wrong with that? What is the deal about that?

Mr Hyde: Equality.

Mr TRENORDEN: What the hell has that got to do with this? I wonder what the member is smoking.

I agree with the principle of one vote, one value. The principle of all western democracies is fair representation. That is not quite one vote, one value and that argument has been put by the member for Pilbara and others. The other issue about fair representation is that throughout the western world people are elected from regions. If people are not elected from regions why not pick up the telephone book and divide it by 57 so that one member can represent half the As, and someone else the Bs etc? We do not do it that way because of the principle of common interest. Even the minister, who is the member for Fremantle, has a common interest. He wants to be the member for Fremantle because he wants to represent Fremantle. He is elected by the people of Fremantle to deliver benefits for the people of Fremantle. That is the way it is. That is why all systems in the western world have variations and differentials to the one vote, one value system.

Dr Gallop: No, they do not.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, they do.

Mr Hyde: What about the House of Representatives?

Mr TRENORDEN: Tasmania and the Northern Territory receive vote weighting in the House of Representatives. The United Kingdom - the home of the Westminster system - has far greater variations in its voting system than we have in ours. In fact Tony Blair the British Prime Minister has set up Parliaments in Scotland and Wales and has a special arrangement for Northern Ireland. That has no relationship to equal voting. One vote, one value does not exist in a pure form. The system that the Government has put up is not a pure one vote, one value system.

Dr Gallop: We agree with the member for Avon.

Mr Hyde: He is supporting us.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am supporting the argument that a one vote, one value system needs a differential. It needs to take into account the disadvantages that we have spoken about here.

My electorate is the country electorate that is closest to the metropolitan area - except for Moore and Mandurah, and Mandurah is a metropolitan seat as far as I am concerned.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: Members opposite are just rabbiting on. I think they have rabies.

Mr Hyde: Is that because we go to the bush so much?

Mr TRENORDEN: No; it is because they have been bitten so much. I apologise for that. Just outside the metropolitan area in the town of Beverley, in which one member opposite has an important interest - she has a wonderful family so I will not pick on her - people cannot run their businesses because it takes hours to log onto the Internet. The Internet is so slow in Beverley that it is not worth paying to be attached to a server.

Mr Hyde: You were there for eight years and you did not fix it with a gerrymander.

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Mr TRENORDEN: Members opposite are amazing. Why do members opposite think we get angry? The comprehension of the member for Perth -

Dr Gallop: You get angry because your party is about to lose some of its influence. The people of regional Western Australia will not lose anything, but your party will. It has nothing to do with regional interest.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members. If one member at a time speaks, I am sure Hansard would appreciate that.

Mr TRENORDEN: Why is the Premier always so angry in this place? He gets angry because he does not control the Labor Party. With reference to Beverley, on driving the full length of my electorate, which is a half-moon around the -

Dr Gallop: When I was there on Saturday I did not see you.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, that is right. I was here attending a meeting beating up the troops about one vote, one value.

My mobile phone will not work in most of my electorate. I am lucky to be able to log onto the Internet in my electorate office for two hours a day before getting booted off. The member for Fremantle takes matters like that for granted. He can walk out of his electorate office and turn on his mobile phone and it will work. His Internet not only works all day but also processes the information at a good speed. I am sure he does not need to wait to be logged on. Even though he does not use public transport, he has every opportunity to do so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would members to my right please show courtesy to the Leader of the National Party so that we can hear what he has to say.

Mr TRENORDEN: Members opposite do not want to hear what I have to say. The member for Perth loves harping on about the fact that 26 per cent of the population live in rural Western Australia and 74 per cent live in the city. After the Government's electoral reform Bill is passed, country people will have 26 per cent of the population and 20 per cent of the seats. That is indicated on the map the Government submitted to the Electoral Commission.

Mr Hyde: If you campaign correctly, you will get 30 per cent of the vote.

Mr TRENORDEN: That will not be possible because the seats will not be in the country; they will be in the metropolitan area. The point I was trying to make about services is important. Mobile phones do not work in the back blocks of Cue, Tambelup or Tammin. I am amazed at city members' belief that services they take so much for granted are already in the country. It is just not true. The basic facts are that if the Labor Party were to win five of the eight seats that the metropolitan area gained, it would have 29 seats in the House. It will be an easy task for the Labor Party to get the majority in this House from metropolitan Perth.

Dr Gallop: We will have to win the votes. We cannot win an election without people voting for us.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, it can. Under this proposal it will have 29 metropolitan seats before anyone else votes.

Dr Gallop: The reverse will apply also.

Mr TRENORDEN: Of course it will. That is why the Bill will be introduced.

Country people have been asked to consider the circumstances. The Labor Party ran this as a campaign issue.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: No, there is no question about that.

Dr Gallop: You did it in trying to oppose our policy but you failed.

Mr TRENORDEN: So did the Labor Party, which did not get any votes from the country areas. One Nation's preferences won the Labor Party the election.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: One Nation, One Nation. They were all won on preferences from One Nation. Their vote did not increase. One Nation's vote increased and gave the Labor Party its preferences. Its members are sitting opposite and are in power for no other reason than the fact that One Nation distributed its preferences to them. They did not pick up a vote from rural Western Australia.

Much of the anger from rural people is towards the Greens. Hon Robin Chapple in the upper House won his seat with 2.6 per cent of the quota or about 3.7 per cent of the vote. Dee Margetts won her seat with 0.27 per cent of the quota and Christine Sharp, who is sitting at the back of this Chamber, was elected with 0.67 per cent of the

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quota. Those people with approximately six per cent of the vote are seeking one vote, one value in this State. If they did not feature in the equation we would not be voting today.

Mr Hyde interjected.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is a great argument! The member for Perth has claimed that votes must be equal but six per cent can be responsible for the decision. That is democracy!

Dr Gallop: Come on. Have you heard of the preferential system? Are you in favour of it?

Mr TRENORDEN: The Greens -

Dr Gallop: If the National Party agreed to get rid of the preferential system it would abolish its own party. Are you saying we should get rid of it?

Mr TRENORDEN: I am saying that the Greens received six per cent of the vote.

Mr Hyde: They were elected democratically under the system the same way as you were.

Dr Gallop: How many votes did you get?

Mr TRENORDEN: I support the notion of the member for Perth. I am happy to vote for the electoral system based on the system the member for Perth just mentioned. If I could win six per cent of the vote and be in this House, I would be very happy.

Dr Gallop: It's called proportional representation.

Mr Hyde: The majority will of Parliament votes on something. That is what is happening.

Mr TRENORDEN: I am far from finished my remarks, but as a vote is to be taken I will make the point that if the Greens (WA) did not support one vote, one value we would not be having this debate.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Edwards	Mr Omodei	Mr Waldron
Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Pental	Dr Woollard
Mr Birney	Mr Johnson	Mr Sullivan	Mr Bradshaw (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mr Sweetman	
Mr Day	Mr Masters	Mr Trenorden	

Noes (28)

Mr Andrews	Mr Graham	Mr McGowan	Ms Radisich
Mr Bowler	Mr Hill	Ms McHale	Mr Ripper
Dr Constable	Mr Hyde	Mr McRae	Mrs Roberts
Mr Dean	Mr Kobelke	Ms Martin	Mr Templeman
Mr D'Orazio	Mr Kucera	Mr Murray	Mr Watson
Dr Edwards	Mr Logan	Mr O'Gorman	Mr Whitely
Dr Gallop	Mr McGinty	Mr Quigley	Ms Quirk (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Board	Mr Marlborough
Mr Marshall	Mr Carpenter
Mrs Edwardes	Ms MacTiernan
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Brown

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 7.02 pm
