

**ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2001**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 28 November.

**HON ROBIN CHAPPLE** (Mining and Pastoral) [11.09 am]: Yesterday I interjected on Hon Derrick Tomlinson, who asked me to respond with a list of members in the House who received fewer than five per cent of the primary vote. Those members were Hon Dee Margetts, Hon Jon Ford, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, Hon Louise Pratt, Hon Derrick Tomlinson, Hon Ray Halligan and me.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Did I get more votes than you?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Which one?

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Carry on with your argument, you silly, twisted man.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Hon Derrick Tomlinson got 255 votes.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Did I?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Personal votes?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: So, 255 people love me! You've made my day.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Other members who received fewer than five per cent of the primary vote were Hon Ken Travers, Hon Graham Giffard, Hon Kate Doust, Hon Simon O'Brien, Hon Adele Farina, Hon Bill Stretch and Hon Robyn McSweeney.

Hon Sue Ellery: How many did I get?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Hon Kate Doust got 322 votes. That issue was raised last night and I thought I would clarify it.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: What about your own colleague sitting alongside you?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I mentioned her.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: I missed that.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I could run through them again but they are all on the record.

The aspect of electoral reform that I want to talk about is consistency. After deliberating over the issue of electoral reform since mid May, the Greens (WA) produced a paper, a copy of which all members should have received, on Monday, 16 July 2001.

Hon Ken Travers: No.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It was given to Hon Ken Travers' party.

I will comment on some of the fundamental issues that we referred to in that paper. Our ideal model of electoral reform is to fundamentally remove the State Government, which reform, unfortunately, did not get much support. We support the notion of having regional governments and removing altogether State Governments as entities.

Our next position is that there should be one House of Parliament, elected on proportional representation, which position also did not get a guernsey. Interestingly, Hon Alannah MacTiernan supported that position in her submission to the Commission on Government, in which she stated -

My first proposal involves the amalgamation of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, effectively replacing the current bi-cameral system with a unicameral system determined by mixed member proportional voting.

Hon Ken Travers: Was that a personal submission?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It was. Her submission continued -

If proportional representation only is permitted in the Legislative Council, smaller parties such as the Greens, -

I would suggest also One Nation -

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who have substantial policy interests, will never have an opportunity to participate in government and therefore to have direct input to the decision making. Given their policy orientation confining them to a role in the review process seems neither rational or fair.

That is a position that the Greens have always taken. A section of our original submission to the Commission on Government, one which very much predates where we are at today and identifies clearly that our position is consistent, states -

The philosophy of the Greens WA from a strictly democratic point of view makes us most comfortable with a statewide proportional representation electoral system. However, we have a strong sympathy with the viewpoint of country people who feel disempowered by such a proposal, given that 70 per cent of the state's population lives in the Perth region. There is a real sense of alienation and neglect through the political and economic influence of a dominant city.

Furthermore, there are acute environmental problems of land degradation and salinisation in the south west corner of the state that need urgent and expensive remedial action over a long period of time. A significant commitment of resources is required. We cannot ignore questions of sustainable city and rural communities on the eve of the 21st century. There is a need to end the growth of Perth in favour of nonmetropolitan regions. Nevertheless, gerrymandered electorates have basically failed country people in this regard. Only a population shift can rectify the situation.

It is fundamental to the Greens WA long term philosophy that local regions should live primarily by using local resources. Unless this is so people cannot be responsible for sustainable use of the environment, living as an integral part of nature rather than dominating. They need to relate positively to their immediate environment to have a sustainable dependence on it.

The recommendations below attempt to take these factors into account. Matters 15 and 16 will be treated as one.

Recommendation 15.1 states -

*The Legislative Assembly continue to be one member seats but with one-vote-one-value. Ministers to be commissioned only from the Legislative Assembly.*

Having read the COG report, I know that every party supported the suggestion that ministers come only from the Legislative Assembly. With deference to our current inimitable ministers in the House, that is still a view held dear by the Greens. The submission continues -

This maintains democratic principles for representative democracy. The intention is that the Legislative Council will be structured to make it work more as a house of review than now, despite the major political parties. Additional electoral office resources and communication facilities should be provided to nonmetropolitan members, especially in the more remote areas to help overcome distance problems. The possibility of dual members for such seats could be considered with limits on voting rights as discussed in the Introduction.

Recommendation 15.2 states -

*Members be elected to the Legislative Council on a statewide proportional representation basis with all members retiring at each election. The Council to be a house of review, with no members eligible for Cabinet. The Council to appoint the Auditor General and approve of the audit program and budget as per recommendations 3.3 and 3.4.*

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Absolutely and I will deal with that.

I move now to a submission made by Hon Jim Scott to the Commission on Government in which he recommended -

- I. One vote-one value weighting is essential for democracy and representation.
- II. Proportional Representation, which also reflects one vote-one value, be implemented . . . so that Parliament and Government can reflect the diverse views and interests within society. . . .
- III. Regional Councils be set up around the State which are allocated resources back by the State and Federal Governments which they can use within the community to promote the social, economic and environmental welfare of communities, especially in rural Western Australia. If we are serious about democracy and letting individuals and communities having control and input into their own lives, then some devolution of Governmental processes needs to be given

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back to communities. It appears very feasible that this could happen within the framework of State and Federal Government Processes and Electoral Systems.

When the Greens (WA) went to the election in 1996, we clearly enunciated in our policy the support for one vote, one value. That section of our policy states -

Reform the electoral system, particularly to enshrine one vote one value and to make the Legislative Council a true House of Review.

That reflects the issue of not having ministers in this place and making it a House of Review.

Hon Ken Travers: When was that?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That was 1996.

Hon Ken Travers: Back when the Liberals supported one vote, one value as well.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I will come to that in a minute. The Greens' election platform this year also dealt with one vote, one value, and again enunciated virtually the same words.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Would you mind stating, for the record, what your platform was?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Certainly. I will read it into *Hansard*.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Please do.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It says -

reform the electoral system, particularly to enshrine one vote one value and introduce proportional representation into the Legislative Assembly.

I will now touch on something that Hon Dee Margetts has passed to me. The submission that the Greens made to the Commission on Government did not impute that we were seeking an amalgamation of Houses, and that is true. It identified that we wished to have proportional representation in both Houses.

It became apparent that a number of positions had been put to COG by many people. However, it comes back to consistency. With that in mind, I will deal with some of the Liberal Party's submissions to COG. It must be remembered that this was done outside the framework of a political hotbed, which is what the Liberal Party's reactionary position seems to be at the moment. The fourth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commission on Government was tabled on 24 October 1995. There was a minority report from the Labor Party. That was co-signed by Larry Graham, and it supported the notion of one vote, one value in its entirety, at a variation of 10 per cent. However, the committee's recommendation to the Government was -

The quota of enrolled voters for each Legislative Assembly electoral district should be determined by dividing the total State enrolment by the number of seats to be distributed. A plus or minus 20 per cent deviation from the quota should be permitted based on the criteria listed below.

The criteria listed are four of the five criteria established by COG. They were community of interest, means of communication and distance from Perth, geographical features, and existing boundaries of regions and districts, including local government boundaries. The committee did not support the appointment of agents to act as contact people for members of Parliament.

I now go to the "Government Response to Commission on Government Reports Nos 1 - 5" of October 1996. COG's recommendation 42 was -

1. The present metropolitan and non-metropolitan zones for the Legislative Assembly should be abolished.
2. The quota of enrolled voters for each Legislative Assembly electoral district should be determined by dividing the total State enrolment, projected four years in advance, by the number of seats to be distributed. A plus or minus 15 per cent deviation from the quota should be permitted based on the criteria listed below.

I have already read out those criteria. Recommendation 42 of the Government's response of October 1996 is -

The Government accepts the major principles of this detailed recommendation: that the current zones for the Legislative Assembly be abolished; that equality of enrolment be the basis for future redistributions; and that facilities for remote and large electoral districts be improved. The Government reserves its position on the details of recommendation 42(2) -

That is the specificity of the 15 to 20 per cent -

and does not accept those parts of this recommendation calling for the appointment of "agents" . . .

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When we talk about consistency, it is important to understand that our position has been pretty consistent all along. I believe Hon Jim Scott made some interesting statements in that regard to the Commission on Government.

The Greens, after a lot of debate within the community and within our membership - that is the way we do things - determined to come up with a model that reflected one vote, one value in the Legislative Assembly, with a variation for those areas over 100 000 square kilometres to take account of the hugeness of those electorates. That was put to the Labor Government on 16 July, and was subsequently accepted by it.

Our Legislative Council model was also put to the Government at that time. That model was a six by six model, based on regionalisation - something that we identified clearly in our submissions to COG when we talked about regionalisation. The six by six model is based on six regions, as is the current situation, with the boundaries determined on what we believe are biogeographic and geographic regions. It provides equity between each of those regions, with six members elected to each region - one extra for the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral, South Metropolitan and East Metropolitan Regions, and one less for the South West and North Metropolitan Regions. To a degree, that is where we have gone on that part of the issue.

Also, part of the package which we put up and which was eloquently put by members of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party to the Commission on Government was that the issue was about resources. In that regard, we have put a recommendation to the Government that the resources for members of Parliament in large or remote electoral districts and regions should be considered; that is, the addition of electorate offices and staff in appropriate districts and regions; staff to receive suitable allowances for travel on behalf of their members; and the appointment of agents to act as contact points for the members, which was part of the recommendation of COG and which I point out was rejected by the Liberal Party.

We talked about many other things, such as free teleconferencing, to assist the community in accessing their members.

It is interesting to note that during the debate on one vote, one value a rally was held outside Parliament House. We went outside to listen to people and I spoke to a number of them. They asked that their elected representatives not be taken away. I asked people what were their key concerns. They said it was not their local members but the return of royalties to the regions and the lack of local services such as hospitals, the lack of police, the lack of roads and the lack of local government grants. They complained about the things we all take for granted. From the very first time Hon Jim Scott entered this House he campaigned on behalf of the Greens (WA) for an improvement in services to country areas. That is notwithstanding he is a metropolitan member. Hon Jim Scott had no vested interest in any way, shape or form in supporting the needs of regional and remote communities. It is philosophically our belief that we have to decentralise and return the regions to the regions. To do that there needs to be an economic parameter.

I want to talk about the potential president of the possibly future seceded Pilbara, Larry Graham. As a member representing a remote electorate he made a submission to the Commission on Government.

Hon J.A. Scott: Was he not in favour of chucking out one vote, one value?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes, he does not like one vote, one value now. In his submission he said -

Let me just explain to people. I have one of the busiest electorate offices in Western Australia, not because - well, it might be, but I mean, not particularly because of anything I do. It is simply that the load of work through my electoral office is a consequence of government departments not having a presence in towns, government departments not being prepared to represent another government department, governments not having public liaison people, people with whom the public can deal. . .

The Commission on Government received many submissions. A staff member for Hilda Turnbull pointed out that most of her work was dealing with matters on behalf of government departments; it was not concerned with carrying out an electorate officer's core duties. She found the same situation when she contacted many other electorate officers. She dealt with public trustee issues because there was no access for people in the country. She dealt with carers' issues and organising the patient assisted travel scheme because there were no government departments or instrumentalities that could deal with the issues in rural areas. When I spoke to the people rallying outside Parliament House about one vote, one value they told me that the reduction in services was the thin end of the wedge. Successive Governments, Labor and Liberal, have taken services away from rural communities and put them in Perth. Electoral representation in those areas not based on one vote, one value would not enhance the situation in any way, shape or form. This Government must reflect meaningfully on how we resource regional communities. If it does, most of the angst experienced by remote and regional

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communities can be dealt with. It is clear that the Liberal Party has changed its philosophical position on this. The Labor Party has had a number of positions. Our position is fairly consistent.

I turn briefly to the National Party. I commend the National Party for being fairly consistent. It made a number of good submissions to the Commission on Government. Some of the submissions supported a review two years after each election. It would result in the true intention of voters being more accurately reflected during elections. It made some extremely good submissions on corruption in government. It supported the removal of two seats from the country because it understood that vote weighting in south west seats was quite invalid. In the light of the Bill foreshadowed by Hon Murray Criddle it also supported the retention of proportional representation in the Legislative Council -

The regions should relate to distinct communities of interest so that the principle of Upper House representation that applies for the Senate also applies for the Council.

That proposition comes close to our model. I continue -

The current regional boundaries achieve that principle to a significant degree.

It will reflect regions that are bio-diverse and community-diverse.

Hon Simon O'Brien: We currently have three metropolitan regions. Why do we not have just one region?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: One could go down that track, but if we are trying to enshrine equity I believe having six regions each with six representatives is the way to go. A metropolitan area that elects 18 members will not be representative of the current metropolitan divisions.

Hon Simon O'Brien: What about a metropolitan area that returns six or nine members? We could have four regions each returning nine members. One of the regions could be metropolitan.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That will break the equity between the country and the city. We should have equity between the city and the country. It does not matter how many members each returns as long as there is equity. That is what we are trying to enshrine.

Hon Simon O'Brien: What about 17 regions each returning two members?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It would be hard to divide the State into 17 regions. It might be easier to have 18 regions each returning two members. All the parties have made submissions to the Commission on Government about this issue.

Hon Barry House: Hon Robin Chapple knows that the only real reason is that the Greens would not win any seats.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Absolutely, and neither would One Nation. COG and others have readily identified the place of minor parties in the Legislative Council. We know that some members do not want us here and they do not want One Nation either.

Hon Dee Margetts: Part of the community needs to have its voice represented here.

Hon N.F. Moore: Your capacity to influence legislation is far in excess of the number of votes you receive. It is all about having the balance of power.

Hon Dee Margetts: We do not have any power.

Hon N.F. Moore: Your mates in the Senate are the same; it is all you are about.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That is the issue. One Nation does not vote in blocks and neither do we.

Hon N.F. Moore: Since when?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: We have voted with the Opposition and we have voted separately. We have seen One Nation vote separately. That is what real democracy is all about - not following party lines.

Hon N.F. Moore: Is it not about your party having the balance of power when it gets so few votes? Your party has vastly more power than the number of votes it receives entitles it to.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It is only power if one wishes to misuse it. That is the key issue.

It was interesting to see that, in many ways, the National Party supports our model. The model was supported by many others in submissions to the Commission on Government. Other issues, including that of ministers in this House, were supported by everybody, yet the same situations exist. I suggest that shows in many ways the consistency -

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Hon Barry House: What makes you think COG was right about everything?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I am referring to the Liberal Party's submission.

Hon Barry House: COG did not necessarily have the monopoly on what is right.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The Liberal Party made a submission on the Commission on Government recommendations supporting the position that ministers should not be members of this Chamber, as did the Labor Party. However, ministers are still in this Chamber.

I have tried to indicate - I will be finished in a minute - that there has been some consistency in the National Party's position but, other than the premise of one vote, one value, there has been little consistency within the Labor Party because many of its other models are different. There has been little or no consistency within the Liberal party.

Hon N.F. Moore: Historically, the Labor Party has never been consistent on the issue of one vote, one value.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: In most of the material I have read, that has been the premise.

Hon N.F. Moore: Read what A.R.G. Hawke says in his report and what Frank Wise said.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: We have already heard those statements. As I pointed out, they are individual viewpoints.

Hon N.F. Moore: Do their words not tell you anything?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The Labor Party has been less than consistent, other than that point of view, in any of the material I have read. It has proposed a number of models and suggestions, as has the Liberal Party.

Hon N.F. Moore: I am saying that you cannot argue that the Labor Party has been consistent on one vote, one value, because it has not been, although it may have been over the past five years.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That is up to the Labor party to argue. I am not here to defend the Labor Party but to reiterate the Greens' position and explain how we arrived at it. The key is that it has been consistent.

**HON B.K. DONALDSON** (Agricultural) [11.41 am]: It is a very sad day for rural and regional Western Australia that we are debating the Electoral Amendment Bill 2001. Like other people, I will quote figures from the Electoral Commission report. I noted that 5 654 ticket votes flowed from the One Nation candidate to Hon Dee Margetts. In fact, she recorded 3 620 first preference votes out of a quota of 13 591. She defeated Murray Nixon, the former member for the Agricultural Region by 228 votes.

Hon J.A. Scott: How many first preferences did he get?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I do not know. I am saying that Hon Dee Margetts is sitting in this House courtesy of One Nation. It has a democratic right to arrange members on its ticket in any way it wants. However, I bet One Nation members think they did not do very well.

Hon John Fischer: I will speak to Jeremy about it very shortly.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Whether One Nation had poor advice or good advice is irrelevant to me.

Hon Dee Margetts: Their non-ticket preferences voted for me as well. Isn't that good?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I received more than 700 non-ticket preferences, so Hon Dee Margetts should not crow too much. I think Hon Dee Margetts lost her deposit, as did Hon Robin Chapple, yet they are sitting in judgment, representing the Agricultural Region and the Mining and Pastoral Region respectively, 85 per cent of whose constituents are firmly opposed to electoral reform. This issue is not about electoral reform or one vote, one value, it is about the establishment of a gerrymander that will see parties re-elected in 2005.

It was also spawned from hatred and revenge. After Mr McGinty and others tripped across to the High Court and took on the State of Western Australia, Dr Amy McGrath wrote an article entitled "One Vote, One Value : Electoral Fraud in Australia" -

This case, heard in the High Court, by members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council of Western Australia in September, 1995, objected to disparities between the number of enrolled voters in city and rural districts. They argued that the Constitutions of both the Commonwealth and Western Australia incorporated representative democracy as the central principle of government, and that equality of voting power was mandated by the Commonwealth Constitution. The defendants submitted that neither required equality of voting power, and were upheld by four of the six judges in a brilliantly argued judgment (Toohey and Gaudron JJ. Dissenting).

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Dawson J. (Gummow J. Concurring) ruled that there can be no implication that a particular electoral system, of the many available, is required by the Constitution, and the Constitution does not contain by implication the principle expressed in the words 'one vote, one value'.

Mr McGinty, who did a good job with the Old Swan Brewery when he duded the taxpayers of Western Australia in a 90-year deal with Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd, although that is beside the point, has had revenge on his mind ever since. This is all about setting up a gerrymander. It has shown clearly in 10 months what this Government is all about. In that 10 months it has walked away from rural and regional Western Australia. That has been proved every day of the week. For example, the State School Teachers Union in Jurien Bay wrote to me today. Next week I will ask questions of Mr Carpenter to show how the State School Teachers Union is working against the Government.

The Greens are vigorous self-seekers looking after themselves. I can assure them that the message will be out loud and clear across those electorates in the next state election. We heard Hon Robin Chapple speak, but will we hear any of the Greens (WA) members speak on electoral reform for the public record so that their constituents -

Hon Dee Margetts: Which ones?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I want to hear from Hon Dee Margetts as a member of the Agricultural Region, Hon Jim Scott and Hon Chrissy Sharp.

Hon Robin Chapple: You have already heard from us.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: What about Hon Giz Watson?

Hon J.A. Scott: I am glad to see you are seeking a bit of wisdom at last.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I am very pleased that they have the courage of their convictions, and will at least put their view to their constituents and this Parliament so that it is on the public record for ever and a day. I can assure them that they will be shown no mercy from people in rural Western Australia. They have the Greens (WA) in their sight. The Greens will not be relying on votes from anywhere else in that next election; except, of course, from its coalition mates, the Labor Party.

I will talk about Labor's "mandate". The ALP recorded a primary vote of just 37 per cent. That is well short of the majority needed to claim a mandate on this issue.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: What did you get?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: The Labor Party is in Government.

I will now quote what Hon Eric Ripper said on 13 March 1997 -

... democracy means that the majority rules.

There is nothing in those words about equality or fairness. The Labor Party misled the people, and did not tell the whole story in the few electorates in which there was debate on electoral changes. Labor's election material was misleading. Megan Anwyl, the former ALP member for Kalgoorlie and the Labor Party's candidate for that seat at the last election, put out a pre-election flyer from which I would like to quote. It states -

Labor will not abolish 16 country seats.

There will always be 2 Goldfields MLA's.

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

Megan Anwyl is not sitting in Parliament because no-one believed her. Fortunately, the Kalgoorlie electorate had an outstanding candidate from the Liberal Party in Matt Birney, whom I believe will become a Premier of this State. The flyer also states -

A better Government is waiting.

The Goldfields deserves better.

Well, they did deserve a better member for Kalgoorlie and they got one! The flyer also states -

There will always be a Member for Kalgoorlie.

There will always be 2 Goldfields MLA's.

What is happening to the seat of Eyre? It is going down the tube. The flyer continues -

Labor will create a Minister for the Goldfields.

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Hon N.F. Moore: They got Hon Nick Griffiths!

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: That is right; another misleading statement. The flyer also states -

The Party that wins more than half the vote wins Government.

Let us turn to more of Labor's pre-election advertising. I refer to a card that was distributed to voters in Bunbury which was titled "My Guarantee". I love this one. This guarantee reminds me of Kim Beazley rushing around stating that he would not sell Telstra. He never had a chance to sell it.

Hon N.F. Moore: He sold the Commonwealth Bank.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Yes, he sold the Commonwealth Bank when Labor was in power. The people saw through the wafer thin quality of the Labor opposition and dealt with it accordingly. That is why the Howard Government has increased its majority by 14 seats - the biggest swing to an incumbent Government in the federal Parliament's history.

The card titled "My guarantee" was a guarantee from Geoff Gallop to the people in the Bunbury and Mitchell electorates. It reads as follows -

to the electors of Bunbury and Mitchell

There will always be at least two members of State Parliament for the Bunbury/Mitchell region. The population of this important region demands it. Remember, only a Labor Government guarantees you a Minister for the South West to directly represent you in Cabinet.

It is signed Geoff Gallop, State Labor Leader. At the bottom of the card it reads -

Keep this card and hold me to my word.

If the Premier had to put out material like that, how can he be trusted? He lied to the people in that region. This type of advertising was appearing right across the board. That was a very interesting.

I turn now to a Westpoll article in *The West Australian* of 9 July 2001. This was not the most accurate gauge of public sentiment, but it provided a good indication of the extent of Labor's mandate. Barely one-third of the Westpoll respondents supported Labor's policy; even a majority of Labor voters opposed it. Clearly, it was a front-of-mind reason why people voted Labor in February. The 37.4 per cent did not vote for electoral reform. The article reads as follows -

33 per cent supported one-vote, one-value, 57 per cent the existing electoral system and 7 per cent were undecided.

42 per cent of Perth voters and 17 per cent of country voters supported the one-vote, one-value.

51 per cent of Perth voters and 76 per cent of country voters supported the existing system.

42 per cent of Labor voters supported one-vote, one-value while 51 per cent backed the existing system.

The article also stated that 70 per cent of Liberal voters backed the current system and that 57 per cent of the voters did not support constitutional change. A later Westpoll showed that 47 per cent of voters supported Labor's plans, but the question asked was different. In areas in which this issue received extensive coverage, the ALP won a minority of seats. In the electorate of Kalgoorlie, Megan Anwyll - the defeated Labor member - stated publicly that the issue of one vote, one value had contributed to her downfall. That is hardly what we would call a powerful mandate. In an article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on 12 February, Ms Anwyll stated -

one-vote, one-value and native title had also been influential in the swing away from Labor".

I now move on to some of the myths associated with Labor's electoral reform. The Labor Party consistently argues that Western Australia is the only State in Australia - and in the western world - that does not have one vote, one value. I will expose that myth. Queensland has country vote weighting for large areas, and the Australian Senate also has six senators elected for each State and Territory regardless of population. However, the ALP's own constitution does not conform to the one vote, one value principle. In fact, the unions control 60 per cent of the Labor Party voting. Britain, the United States and Canada also do not have a pure one vote, one value system. Dr Gallop agreed with the Commission on Government recommendation that all changes to the constitution should go to the people in a referendum. By failing to include one vote, one value in the Constitution Act, Dr Gallop is aborting the commitment to a referendum.

It is interesting to see the difference between local government and the Parliament of Western Australia. When the Western Australian Municipal Association was formed from the three associations - the Country Shire Councils Association of Western Australia, the Country Urban Councils Association of Western Australia and the Local Government Association of Western Australia - the WAMA executive consisted of 12 members.



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There were five members from the country shires, five from the Local Government Association and the metropolitan councils, and two from the country urban councils. This meant that there were seven from the country regions and five from the metropolitan regions. The voter base is exactly the same as that of a State election because it is the same people. However, local government had enough sense to realise that there had to be equity of representation. It was nothing to do with one vote, one value. To their credit the metropolitan councils said that when talking about numbers they believed in fairness. We needed across-the-board community input from the north west down to south west, including the metropolitan area. I made sure that, by right, we had representation above the twenty-sixth parallel from the north west council sitting on the executive of the Western Australian Municipal Association. It is interesting that the formation of the WA Local Government Association will see the abolishment of those three associations that I mentioned. The new association will be launched next Thursday evening by the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, Hon Tom Stephens. The State Council of Western Australian Local Government Association will consist of 24 members, 12 each from the country and metropolitan areas. Once again, it is the same voter base. Voting is non-compulsory, but if everyone had to go along and vote, that is what I am talking about. That is fairness. Local government leads in principle, and is far in front of what the Labor Party and the Greens (WA) are trying to force on the people of Western Australia, in their own self-interest.

Referendums have a history of failure in Western Australia, and this is given as a reason for not holding one on this matter. It is true that only eight of 44 constitutional referendums have been carried in Western Australia. However, this may also have to do with the electors giving serious consideration to the questions being asked, rather than, as the Minister for Electoral Affairs suggests, because the voters are ignorant and do not know what is good for them. This is the Minister for Electoral Affairs in this State saying that voters are ignorant and do not know what is good for them! It is outrageous and an absolute insult to those people. In *Hansard* of 8 August 2001, the Minister for Electoral Affairs said -

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.

He treats them like sheep. It is very evident where Mr McGinty and the Labor Party are coming from - a position of absolute contempt.

We also see the Greens (WA) getting into bed with the Labor Party as coalition partners. They talk about the number of times the Greens have voted with the Liberal Party. I have a very good memory, I might say to Hon Jim Scott and to Hon Robin Chapple, who was not around here over the past eight years. I remember the number of times the Greens quickly went across the floor and joined the Labor Party Opposition, along with the two Australian Democrats. It happened time after time. I am watching very closely every time the Greens vote on any meaningful Bill. I can tell you, Mr President, that the Greens will never vote with the Liberal Party. Hon Jim Scott has been here long enough to know that. He should not start sprouting high moral ethics.

Hon J.A. Scott: I will deal with that later on, when I speak on the Bill.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I hope that Hon Jim Scott will do so, because I think the Opposition has been able to put a charge of gelignite down the rabbit warren and get a few of them to come out. Hon Jim Scott did not intend to say anything until he was challenged, and now all the Greens are rushing away to prepare. Hon Dee Margetts, no doubt while on urgent parliamentary business, is at the same time getting more information so that she can make a speech that she was not going to make.

Let the people decide, in a referendum. Although the independent Commission on Government recommended one vote, one value, it stressed that such an important structural change should be included in the State's constitutional system. The Commission on Government wanted to enshrine the main structural parts of our electoral system in the constitutional Acts, thereby providing for a strong degree of entrenchment to make it harder for any political party to tamper with the system. The Labor Party, specifically Mr McGinty once again, attempts to give the President a vote, so that Labor can obtain an absolute majority, which was needed to get this Bill through. This will be tested in the court, which means that this debate has probably been a waste of time. The court will probably do what I will do to the Bill at a later stage of my speech.

If Dr Gallop had a mandate for reform, it follows that the mandate was for the process set out by the Commission on Government, which he endorsed, definitely not the way the Government is now implementing its electoral changes, by the back door. There will always be serious doubts about any proposal to water down the entrenchment provisions of our electoral system. Dr Gallop has not explained why his position has changed. Clearly the reason lies in the fact that he and Mr McGinty wish to avoid the entrenchment provisions of the Electoral Distribution Act, especially the need for a constitutional majority in the upper House, in order to make the electoral changes. Political expediency is neither a good nor a valid reason to dispense with universally

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accepted democratic principles. Labor has shown the typical arrogance it displayed between 1983 and 1993, when it wasted about \$1.5 billion of taxpayers' money. We know all the other bits and pieces that went with that. Dr Gallop has referred to the idea of holding a referendum on major electoral changes as lunacy, and a joke. This is recorded in *Hansard* of 31 July 2001. We should add to that Mr McGinty's statement of 8 August 2001, which I quoted earlier. In simple terms, Mr McGinty believes that people must not be allowed to pass judgment on constitutional matters, because they do not know what is good for them, and they give the wrong answers. Once again, what a complete insult to the voters of Western Australia to be making those statements constantly! They are the wrong answers for arrogant centralists or elitists, like the post-war British Labour member of Parliament Douglas Jay, who famously said that the gentlemen in Whitehall knew better what was best for the people than the people did themselves. This is Labor philosophy for the year 2001, supported by its coalition partners, the Greens (WA).

In his second reading speech on this Bill Mr McGinty cited what he saw as an example of the ignorance of voters. I love Mr McGinty's statements, and the arrogance he shows to rural and regional Western Australia. That is why the Labor Party got only 8.99 per cent of the vote - a total of 905 votes - for a very good candidate in the Merredin by-election. It had nothing to do with the candidate; it was just the way country people are now viewing this Government. The other day, Mr Kucera, the Minister for Health, was reported as saying that he would not be out in that area very often, as Dr Gallop has said that there are no votes out there for the Labor Party. Dr Gallop was right - 905 votes was the best the Labor Party could do. The result was an absolute disgrace for a political party to have the worst electoral performance since 1905 in Western Australia.

The Government should bring over Simon Crean, our gallant, dashing federal Leader of the Opposition, who is wandering around in western Sydney asking people why they did not vote for the Labor Party. Jenny Macklin, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, is trooping along behind. She has a radical gay agenda. We have not seen half of it yet.

Hon Alan Cadby: They have sold their souls to the Greens (WA). I said that yesterday.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Of course they have. Simon Crean and Jenny Macklin will never see government anyway, so no wonder even Peter Costello is smiling, and John Howard has a grin from ear to ear, as has all the ministry, because they cannot believe their luck. They cannot believe that Simon Crean and Jenny Macklin are running around as a team. Crean is a well-known former Australian Council of Trade Unions leader, so he is dominated by the unions. Simon Crean was a carping, whining and whingeing shadow Treasurer. Can anyone looking at that fellow and expect people to vote Labor in three years? People will want to entrench John Howard and Peter Costello into the Constitution and let them appoint their successors, because they have been so successful in making Australia one of the greatest countries in the western world, economically and in every other way. The way they have turned this country around from the absolute disaster of 13 years of a Hawke-Keating regime is a great credit to them.

In his speech during the second reading debate Mr McGinty said that a Democrat and a federalist might have stopped to ask why they were defeated, and they might respond that they were defeated because their proposals were almost without exception designed to increase the powers of executive government generally, to increase the ability of the Commonwealth and its instrumentalities to undermine the States, and to weaken the Senate in relation to the executive-controlled House of Representatives; moreover, many questionable proposals were disguised by such misleading titles as "democratic elections" and "rights and freedoms". He also said that Australian voters over 100 years have steadfastly refused to be sold pups by either ALP Governments deliberately pursuing centralism or by conservative Governments putting expediency ahead of democratic principle.

There is a bit of sting in the tail for both major parties. The State Government is wandering along. I suppose that the Premier phones Tony Blair and tells him that he does not know what he is doing and asks him for some help. He is getting all his riding instructions from Tony Blair. Labor Party members' philosophy and ideology have not altered at federal and state levels, at which they are centralists. I call ALP members vigorous self-seekers with self-interests. That is what it is all about. I feel very sorry that we have a Government, as Hon George Cash stated in the House recently, 10 months into a four year term, that is already in decay.

Mr McGinty does not know or understand the history of referenda in this State. During the debate in this Parliament he said that referenda were unlikely to succeed in Western Australia. In fact, the treatment of state referenda by the electors of Western Australia suggests a strong degree of deliberate consideration. I will mention some of the referenda. In 1900 the Forrest Government asked voters to decide whether to join the Commonwealth. Over 69 per cent voted in favour, which was a much bigger yes margin than in either New South Wales or Queensland. In 1911 the Wilson Liberal Government asked voters whether they wanted the number of liquor licences increased. This should interest the Minister for Racing and Gaming, although he

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would know all this with his background. The Wilson Government also asked voters whether it should regulate the liquor industry. If I remember correctly, Hon Barry House gave us a long and most interesting briefing on that one evening in the Parliament. He may have mentioned at the time how successful referenda can be. Some 79 per cent voted against the first Wilson Government proposition and 64 per cent were in favour of continued state regulation.

In 1921 the Mitchell coalition Government resubmitted the questions on state regulation and control of liquor licences and got a 55 per cent yes vote, with over one-third of electors voting informally. At the same poll electors were able to choose between four options, ranging from increasing the number of liquor licences to full prohibition. Some 51 per cent preferred continuation or increase. In 1925, the ALP Government submitted a prohibition referendum. Some 65 per cent of the electors voted no. In 1933 the Mitchell Government submitted a referendum proposing secession, with a second calling for a new constitutional convention. The first passed with 66 per cent support and the second failed with 42 per cent voting yes. In 1950 the McLarty coalition Government put forward a prohibition referendum, and nearly 74 per cent of voters said no. The liquor industry has certainly caused some problems over the years.

A referendum on daylight saving was put forward by the Court Government in 1975, with 53.7 per cent of voters voting no. The Burke ALP Government submitted a second referendum in 1984 and drew a 54.5 per cent no vote. The Lawrence ALP Government revisited the question in 1992 and got a 53.1 per cent no vote. With the exception of the referendum in 1993, all the referenda were held separately from parliamentary elections.

We are not talking about one vote, one value at all; what we are talking about, and will continue to talk about, is equity of representation. The interesting aspect of the Government's proposal is the dummy voters. The new seat of Gascoyne, for example, will have 7 000 imaginary or dummy voters allocated to it. I do not know how a dummy vote can be used and people can say that we have one vote, one value. The Government may be about to apportion some of those 7 000 votes by ballot in the electorate, so 7 000 people in the electorate may get two votes. It will probably be best to have a lottery.

Hon Alan Cadby: The votes will probably go to the Greens.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Yes, that is quite true.

In the *Hansard* of 13 March 1997 on page 327, Dr Gallop said -

One vote, one value is the only way in which we can have a legitimate basis for determining our electoral boundaries in Western Australia.

Mr Ripper said -

Equally, democracy means that the majority rules.

He never qualified that remark by excluding the northern regions. At the thirty-eighth state conference of the Australian Labor Party, WA branch, on constitutional reform, it was resolved that Labor believes that the Constitution should be the fundamental compact between the Western Australian people and their Government, and, to ensure this objective, Labor will act to entrench the principle of one vote, one value.

Labor's legislation reduces the degree of entrenchment. In the Commission on Government report No 1 at page 295, Dr Geoff Gallop is reported as saying -

It is for the properly elected representatives of the community to decide whether or not and in what areas country people ought to be compensated for the facts of distance and isolation which they experience. To compensate via malapportionment is an illegitimate method within a democratic system as it creates different classes of citizens.

Labor supports malapportionment in country areas. What is Labor's real agenda? It is vote rigging; that is what it boils down to. Labor Party members are saying that there is nothing in the country regions for them so they will shift eight seats into the metropolitan area. Metropolitan lower House members who have at the moment 33 000 or 35 000 electors probably need at this stage a No 2 wood, maybe even a big No 1 slammer, to hit a ball across their electorate. One member said to me that all he really needed was an increase in staff from one 0.4 full-time equivalent employee to one full-time employee. It is a matter not of the number of people the member must handle, but of having the extra staff member to assist him in making sure he is able to respond to constituents' inquiries and assist them with some of their difficulties. He said that he could handle another 5 000, 7 000 or 8 000 people. He said that if one vote, one value goes ahead, he will probably need only a No 7 iron. A less skilled golfer would need a No 5 iron to hit a ball across the electorate. Most metropolitan members could walk the length and breadth of their electorate. They could take a short drive and, before long, they would be in another electorate. If this legislation is passed, the residents of Victoria Park will be in two electorates. Dr

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Gallop will be the member for the northern side and another Labor person will be the member for the southern side. The electorates will be split up and all the Labor voters will be corralled to create two safe Labor seats covering Victoria Park. This measure is about vote rigging; it will enshrine a gerrymander to ensure this Government's re-election in 2005.

What is being done to country people is abhorrent. Most lower House country members - some of whom are members of the Labor Party - have great difficulty getting around their electorates. They must travel huge distances and they suffer greater dislocation in their family and social life. I accept that they have made the choice to be a member of Parliament, but they face much greater pressures than metropolitan members.

The seat of Merredin has 12 500 voters and stretches from Dalwallinu to Hyden. If this legislation is passed, the number of voters and the size of the electorate will almost double. Members should think about the difficulties that a country member will face, especially if he becomes a minister. It is difficult to imagine the hurdles such a member will face in serving his constituents. We are talking about another three or four hours travelling time from one end of an electorate to the other. They are totally unproductive hours. A lower House member in the Perth region, with 23 000 voters, will have a 10-minute or 20-minute drive to his electorate from Parliament House. Metropolitan members might have three or four schools and one local authority to worry about.

If the legislation is passed, we should reduce the remuneration for metropolitan lower House members, because I do not know what they will do with themselves. We should also double the remuneration for country lower House members. No real thought has been given to the equity of this legislation, although the Labor Party is keen to implement it. One of the architects of the one vote, one value legislation has been a member of this House for some time. He has made many speeches about this issue. Mr McGinty is only the messenger - or the accomplice.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is a more appropriate term.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: It is better terminology. *The West Australian* has proved over the past seven or eight years that it has no love for the coalition. The 3 August 2001 editorial 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. This principle can be sustained only if it applies uniformly to all voters. Anything else is electoral manipulation.

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 . . .

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

That is a quote from a newspaper that was highly critical of the coalition Government. It never acknowledged what the coalition did for Western Australia. The Court Government left office with Western Australia in a sound position. It doubled expenditure on health, education, police and law and order.

On 18 November 1997, when commenting on the Commission on Government recommendations, Dr Gallop stated that one vote, one value was not in the immediate political interests of the Australian Labor Party. Who was he trying to fool? He was trying to fool everyone. Labor's plan would make it very hard for the Liberals to hold seats in the Gascoyne and Kalgoorlie regions and would give the Australian Labor Party a further electoral advantage by transferring eight seats to Perth, where Labor is traditionally stronger. This is hypocrisy at its worst. I would like to demonstrate what the people in my electorate think of this Bill and what the Labor Government, supported by the Greens (WA), is doing to country Western Australia. They have asked me to do many things with this Bill, some of which are unparliamentary. They would like me to tear it up, and I will.

**HON J.A. SCOTT** (South Metropolitan) [12.27 pm]: I have sat through a lot of self-serving, mewling, tissue-wetting, irrelevant nonsense presented by members looking after their own interests. Where were these people -

Hon N.F. Moore interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): I want one member to speak at a time. Most members have had a fair go without interjections, unless they invited them. I am listening to Hon Jim Scott.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The proposition has been put that the lack of amenities and the difficulties faced by those in regional areas are a result of this Bill. There are two problems with that argument: first, those problems exist under the current system.

Hon M.J. Criddle: That is not what I said.

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Hon J.A. SCOTT: I cannot counter every statement that every member made. However, that was the general thrust of members' contributions. I have heard nothing about principles, the philosophies driving members' beliefs and what other systems might be implemented. The Greens (WA) have been roundly criticised and we have been likened to Judas. I have heard little rational debate about the best electoral system for this State. All we have heard is many sad stories generated by self-interest. Let us get real! The members complaining about this legislation are thinking about themselves. Which members of this place supported the sale of the R&I Bank Ltd? That bank was established to encourage state and regional development. Who was the only person in this Chamber who spoke against that?

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You were.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There was one person. Who sold off Westrail?

Hon M.J. Criddle: I did.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes, and why is Hon Murray Criddle not complaining about the fact that freight rates have increased by 16 per cent?

Hon M.J. Criddle: That's rubbish.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The Western Australian Farmers Federation told me that freight rates have increased 16 per cent since the sale of Westrail.

Hon M.J. Criddle: Over time they went down 40 per cent. We were going to put them up by 12 per cent before the sale went through. They were not increased only because we gave \$10 million to the farmers in the middle of a season.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: We heard from the same former minister, who spent a fortune on building massive roads around the city, that there was not enough money for roads in rural areas. That was because of the massive road projects he wanted to build in the city where people were not asking for those roads to be built. Who pushed for some of the proceeds of the gold tax introduced in this House to be spent back in the regions from where it came? It was not the conservative parties; it was the Greens (WA). Who stood in this place and lobbied members about the introduction of the Mutual Recognition (Western Australia) Bill to prevent problems that would have occurred in the apple and pear industry in this State? It was not the conservative parties; it was the Greens.

Hon M.J. Criddle: Your contribution to this State has been a network of words and no action.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The Greens were not in government and did not have the power to do that. However, we got an agreement out of the Government to put tax money back into the regions; the former minister knows that is true. We helped also to prevent the introduction of exotic diseases into this State through that mutual recognition Bill and are still fighting to prevent that from happening. Members opposite did not do that.

The previous Government built belltowers, museums and all those sorts of things when there were far more important things for it to do in this State. It got the State involved in a great many high-cost projects which put it into a lot of debt. We can talk about the appalling deal that was done with the Kwinana motorplex. Against the will of the community in that area, that wonderful Government, which said that it cared about the regions, preferred to pump in millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to prop up two people without providing any tenders or any proper process. Some members of the rural population in that area are very angry about the motorplex being built there. The previous Government even went as far as paying back through Healthway the lease money that it was intended these people pay to operate the motorplex.

Many members in this place did very little for the regions when they were in power. They had no real concept of regionalisation. Let us look at the various parties' economic policies to see which party in this Parliament prefers a regional economic model and which is considering putting more money back into the regions. It is not the conservatives, who are worried about their seats; it is not the National Party; it is the Greens.

Hon Ray Halligan: You sound like Bob Hawke who believed that by saying no child would live in poverty by a certain year that it would in fact happen. That is the path you appear to be going down. This is what we stand for, but you are able to do exactly nothing, and you have done nothing.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I am highlighting a point to Hon Ray Halligan. I am glad that he and Hon Bruce Donaldson spoke, because I was impressed to hear that both of them believe that an equality of vote is a gerrymander. They have reversed the dictionary definition of gerrymander.

Hon Ray Halligan: What will happen to the upper House? You are saying there should be the same number of seats in the metropolitan area. You have not shown us where that line is and you have not identified what is

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metro and what is regional. However, the number of voters in the regional areas will not be anywhere near the number in the metropolitan area.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Hon Ray Halligan is correct on that point, but he is wrong on one aspect; that is, we, the parliamentarians, whether or not we are in government, do not draw those lines; the Electoral Commissioner does. We, therefore, have no power over where they are drawn.

Hon Ray Halligan: But you have some input. As I said, you are selective in your thinking.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: No, I am not.

Hon Ray Halligan: As far as the upper House is concerned you do not mind that inequality.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Exactly.

Hon Ray Halligan: But in the lower House you want something different.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is exactly right.

Hon Ray Halligan: There is no consistency in your argument.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The member is wrong. There is great consistency in my argument. The Government is not formed in this House. The people who win government and get the right to sit on the government benches should have equality of vote. However, in the House of Review we need to have an overview in the same way as the Senate has. The Senate has no more members from New South Wales than it has from Tasmania.

Hon Ray Halligan: If you did in the upper House what you want to do in the lower House you would not have any seats.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is not what I am saying. The member has not stayed in the Chamber for an answer. We agreed to the regional model in the upper House. I had some trouble with the difference in the vote weighting in the upper House, but I thought that it was important to have it for consistency for the future development of regional government. We must have regions to do that and if we do not have regions we cannot have a system of regional development. The problem in this State is not that there are not enough conservative politicians in the Parliament, but that the resources are not going out to the regions, as Hon Robin Chapple pointed out. People in regional Australia are concerned because they believe they have not been given a fair go. That view is held not only in Western Australia but also in every other State.

On this issue the Greens have gone forward with clearly enunciated principles in its position which has been outlined to each House. We went to every party in the Parliament in the early negotiating stage of this Bill. In most cases we received in return a lack of thought from the conservatives.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: They have no answer for you.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is correct. There were no answers then and there are no answers now. All that conservative members were worried about was self-preservation. They were not concerned about trying to find a model that would best suit the needs of this State, as the Greens did. We tried to find a model that would balance the need for representation against the need for an equality of vote. Both of those principles are important and that is what we are trying to do.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Are you aware of the observation of the Leader of the House that there is not currently an ounce of grey matter on the opposition benches?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That would certainly appear to be the case at this time.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: And not one of them is disagreeing with that observation.

Hon Frank Hough: Is there an echo in the Chamber?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes. I will read from the One Nation policy document.

Hon John Fischer: I am glad that you will. We will now hear something that has a bit of depth.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Good. I am glad. Under land rights, the policy document says -

One Nation's philosophy is to treat all Australians equally and the same. We must stop the division caused by the senseless and destructive agenda that insists on highlighting our differences - we must all be treated equally.

Hon John Fischer: What a truly admirable concept.

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Hon J.A. SCOTT: I think it is very good too. I totally agree with it. Under education and training, the policy document says -

that educational opportunities and resources should be available on an equal basis to all Australian citizens.

I will skip the middle bit because it does not change the meaning. It continues -

... no section of the community has a monopoly on being disadvantaged.

I agree with that as well. I hope One Nation members also agree with it.

Hon John Fischer: Hon Jim Scott, that is why we wrote it down and put it out.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Good. Under law and order, the policy document says -

ensuring equality of treatment before the law, regardless of race or cultural background.

I totally agree with all those principles, and I hope that One Nation members continue to agree with them as well.

Hon John Fischer: We have not been converted as a result of anything we have heard in here.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes. After listening to some of the previous speakers, one would truly believe that they are still living in another century, before the invention of the telephone, fax and e-mail, and that country people are an incapable lot who are unable to get anywhere to talk to their members of Parliament. I think Hon Paddy Embry mentioned Albany. The conservatives would have us believe that the people of Albany have great problems. When I have stayed in Albany, I have gained the impression that it would be a wonderful place to live. It is one of my favourite towns in Western Australia. I could easily and happily live there.

Another interesting thing is that not many of the members who are complaining about the Bill spoke about the Bill. They said a lot about what has happened in federal Parliament and what happened in the Merredin election and so on. However, they did not say much about the legislation and the principles and philosophies behind it. One thing was missing; that is, they did not say that they were seeking equality for people who live in large regional centres such as Mandurah, and places like Rockingham. Rockingham is in my electorate. I do not see why the people of Rockingham should have half the voting power of the people in Mandurah. The people in Mandurah have as many facilities and the same access to services as do the people in Rockingham, if not more. Therefore, it is rather strange that there is this dichotomy. They talk about the hard-done-by people in the real rural areas, but they do not mention the other unfairness.

Hon John Fischer: Surely, you would acknowledge that the difference between Roebourne and Rockingham is extreme.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Indeed, they are different. However, there has been no acknowledgment of the need to address the issue that the people of Mandurah have a vote that is worth twice that of the people of Rockingham. The people in Mandurah have two representatives in Parliament compared with one in Rockingham.

Hon Robin Chapple: There has been no recognition by the other side or this side of the House that those people in Roebourne require government services.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is right. That is the problem. There seems to be a basic assumption that by having more National Party and Liberal Party politicians, there will somehow be a change and the regions will be well served. However, who are the advocates of the system of government and of the economic system that creates centralisation; that is, the national competition-type policy that takes away the services provided in country areas, and the people who are employed in those areas to provide those services, and places them in the city? Which members scoff when I and others say that our city has reached an optimal size and that we should perhaps consider stopping the growth of the city and building a new city somewhere else? Those members want to pump more resources into the centre, bring all the money back to Perth and spend it in Perth; yet those members are saying that we need more of them to continue doing the same thing and that will be good for country people. That is a lot of arrant nonsense. Their record speaks for itself.

I will explain my ideas of what we should move towards in this State. I come from an egalitarian base. As the One Nation policy document states, I believe that people are equal. That does not mean that a person is not equal because he has more or less money than someone else. I enjoyed growing up in a country in which, as a young man, I could go into a front bar and find people of different levels communicating and getting on well together. That is disappearing in today's Australia, and I regret that. My egalitarianism leads me to believe that everybody's vote for the Government of the day should have, as close as possible, an equal weighting.

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I have also lived and worked in country areas for a large slice of my life, and I understand the difficulties that people in those areas have. I recognise that there is more to equality than having an equal vote. It depends to some degree on having access to and being listened to by members in this place, for example, or people in power anywhere. It also depends upon having the tools to understand how the system works. People must have a proper education and know how the system works before they can ask questions and approach others to get things done. For instance, if people are concerned about a pollution issue in their area, they must know that a certain organisation can be reached by telephone, and they can then try to get something done about it. Of course, even if people know how the system works, it does not necessarily mean that something will be done.

We must balance the equality issue. I do not want to live in a country in which people have different values. I do not want to go back to the days when only landowners were able to vote in this House of Parliament. I sometimes think that the Liberal and National Parties want that to happen in this State; that is, they want only people who they think are worthwhile to have a say. We would have a very boring, sterile and unfair society if that happened. I want to go in the other direction. I want to give more power to people. Hon Robin Chapple read out extracts of my submission to the Commission on Government. I stressed the need for better resources for people in country areas and that stronger grassroots participation is needed in our system of government. Members will note that I arranged to have the planning amendment Bill sent to a committee to look at third-party appeal rights. That would involve handing back powers to the community. That idea was not liked very much by the coalition Government. It is because of these things that the Greens have made their proposals for the upper House and the lower House. The House of Government should have an equality of votes and the House of Review should have an overview that protects the interests of minorities in this State.

That fits in very neatly with the system of economic and social development in this State. We should see regional areas of the State being built up into much stronger entities when it comes to who controls the flow of money and who decides the level of money spent on health and other issues. The State needs decentralisation at a fundamental level to entrench a regional system. At the same time, we must change the way in which we fund development in outlying areas and the way in which we treat resources. Money currently comes out of the regions and flows to the cities of Perth and Canberra and is spent by people who have only one interest in the regions: exploitation. We want to see a gradual build-up of a system in which a lot more money from the regions goes back into the regions.

That has been the position of the Greens for as long as I have been in the party. It is not something new. We are not springing something on the community that people did not know about us before. Hon Bruce Donaldson talked about recent polls. Despite the Liberal Party, the National Party and One Nation saying that the Greens have sold out the country, our polling in country areas is still holding up well. In fact, it is increasing. People recognise a principled position when they see one as opposed to a self-serving one.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Why did the Greens not field a candidate in the Merredin by-election?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: We did not think it worthwhile doing so. We do not have as much money as the Liberal Party. We do not have money to waste on exercises that are not worthwhile. In a full state election we would field a candidate.

Unlike some of the others that went to Merredin, the Greens are realists; we understand realities. As I said before, we are not interested in increasing a gerrymander to assist other parties. My observation of the parties that hold most of the seats in the bush is that they are not parties of the country but of farmers and pastoralists. They have done very little for towns in rural areas.

Hon John Fischer: Without farmers and pastoralists the country would never have been opened up. The towns would not be there.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is quite so but the towns are important for the social fabric of rural communities. Hon Frank Hough talked about Doodlakine. Members should see how big it is today. Lots of towns like that have not received any funds for development.

Hon John Fischer: If the member read more of our policies he would understand why.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do not need to read One Nation policies to understand. I saw what happened in those areas when I lived in them. I experienced some of the poor policies put in place. I can give many examples. Kellerberrin used to have a very large foundry that was driven by providing equipment and parts for the Chamberlain factory that produced tractors. The Government of the day, which I think was a conservative Government, had a motto: get big or get out. That was its saying for country areas. The idea was that people had to buy out their neighbours and get bigger properties otherwise they would go broke. They were told they needed big tractors and other machinery.



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Hon B.K. Donaldson: The member is talking about the days when wheat was \$400 a tonne. If we had those prices now towns would still be flourishing.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There were no programs to ensure that people who provided other services in the areas stayed there. There was no thought given to telling Chamberlain that it had to retool because bigger tractors were needed. Chamberlain was a successful tractor company, but it disappeared. It became an agent for John Deere Ltd and others. No thought was given to the social impact on towns and that the loss of farmers would result in the loss of shops. The loss of shops resulted in the loss of more people from towns. All the thinking and planning was economic and no thought was given to social considerations. That is the hallmark of the people who now tell us that more people should live in the country. They had a total disregard for the social aspects of communities. Our lives do not depend just on money.

Hon John Fischer: If more people live in country areas they will have more representatives and more will be done to keep open local hospitals and businesses.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Except that we already have more people representing the country. In some areas, the ratio is four to one when compared with city electorates. People being elected think only about centralist planning.

Hon John Fischer: That form of representation is the purest form of centralisation one can get.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The member is talking about national competition policy-type development.

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Before the break I was explaining to members that the position of the Greens (WA) has been worked out over time in consultation with all the other parties. We revealed our position to all the other parties but received no feedback, apart from some encouragement from One Nation and the Liberal Party at one stage. That is not to say that they were totally in favour of our idea, but at that stage they considered it was a better proposition than a system of one vote, one value for both Houses.

As I said, the position was based on balancing two principles - the principle of equality of each vote and that everyone should be equally valued in our society and have the same amount of representation in government, and the principle that people should have representation and access to more services in the more far-flung regions of the State. It has been very interesting to see the way in which this debate has been devoid of those issues of principle. After all, second reading debates are supposed to consider the principles and philosophies behind legislation. However, we have heard much whingeing and carping about how many conservative members will be lost in the other House rather than acknowledging an important issue to the people of Western Australia and trying to find a model that best suits not only the country or the city, but also the State, and helps to draw the areas together rather than divide them.

Hon N.F. Moore: You set out to find a system that would preserve your situation. You are an absolute hypocrite on this.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The Greens would be better off with the current system. Hon Norman Moore has perpetuated the furphy that somehow this legislation will be of great value to the Greens. If he checks the figures he will see that we would have lost seats at the last election under this new system.

Unlike the coalition and One Nation for that matter, and probably the Labor Party, the Greens have not allowed that to stop them from doing what they see as a long-term solution to maintaining the regions, while delivering in the House of Government equity to every citizen of this State. Irrespective of whether members agree, it is a principled position, unlike the argument we are hearing from the whingers and carpers on the other side who are concerned about only one thing. We have heard threats about how the system will end up with two-member electorates, for example.

People claim that they want to be properly represented, but then want to cut out the smaller groups in our society from having any representation. That shows the shallowness of their argument and that it has no basis in principle.

Hon W.N. Stretch: That is nonsense. The groups are strongly represented in the major parties. Neil Bartholomaeus "greened" the Labor Party about 1982. There is a strong green conscience within the major parties. In the long term it boils down to whether you are in the mainstream or out of it.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Probably both the old parties do not understand the philosophy of the Greens (WA) party. They see our philosophy as being based on green issues. However, our philosophy is not based only on environmental issues. The difference between the Greens (WA) and people on the Liberal and Labor side of politics who have a green tinge is that the Greens (WA) is the only party that insists that a balanced ecology

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cannot be achieved unless all policies work in that direction. A party cannot have a centralist economic policy like that of the Liberal Party and expect to achieve regional development.

Hon W.N. Stretch: That is nonsense.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It is not nonsense. Unless some power is given to the regions through an economic model that is regionally based, all the moneys will flow into the major city in this State and to Canberra, as they do today. These issues should be examined more deeply. The difference between the Greens (WA) party is not at issue here, except that we are having thrown back at us the notion that Western Australia should have a system without minority parties. In other words, members opposite are saying that the country is not adequately represented, and their solution is to get rid of the small parties that represent a section of that community.

Hon W.N. Stretch: Don't put words into my mouth.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: If members opposite are trying to present a principled position, which they are not doing, they are arguing against their philosophy. That is the problem. I hope that when Hon Norman Moore speaks in his unlimited time, he will outline a principled position with a view to how he would like to see the future of this State, rather than use scaremongering and name calling tactics as has occurred so far, which has taken the debate in circles and bored everybody sick. The point of principle has been the basis of the Greens' argument. I hope the level of debate can be lifted so that we can discuss those issues rather than how badly the National or Liberal Parties will fare as a result of this legislation. That is not what it is supposed to be about. People should have a bit more thought for the community rather than for themselves.

The ridiculous proposition that somehow the Greens will do better if the electorate is divided into six regions, each with six members is not borne out by the facts. The figures will show that the Greens (WA) will be worse off. Let us lay that furphy to rest. The direction we are taking will probably not be the perfect solution. The Greens would like to see many other reforms to the electoral system in this State. However, the reality is that we must achieve what we can. Changes to the electoral system will evolve. The Greens would like to see a far more regionally-based model. In fact, I would like to see the day when there are strong regions around Australia, and we can get rid of the State Governments altogether.

Hon Barry House: Well spoken, Mr Whitlam.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I am not Mr Whitlam; I have my own reasons for thinking that, based on the reality of Western Australia today, which is almost the most centralised State in the world. One city sucks the rest of the State dry. All the resources are taken from everywhere else, and do very little.

Hon Barry House: You are proliferating that by supporting this legislation.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I am not proliferating it. Even with the current gerrymander, probably favouring the National Party more than the Liberal Party, Western Australia is still the most centralised State in the world. Nothing has been done about that, so the facts speak for themselves. If, in fact, having more members in the country - Hon Barry House probably means more conservative politicians - would stop centralisation, that would be acceptable. The facts speak for themselves. The previous Government sold Westrail and the state bank, and pushed national competition policy, which took away jobs in the country areas. People who do not have the imagination to stop this process think there should be more members of Parliament out there, making even more of them than before. This State needs some sort of overview that protects the interest of rural and regional people. Under the system proposed by the Greens (WA), in this House there will be an equality of country and city votes. In the House of Government -

Hon Barry House: Members can then be elected with three per cent of the vote, as in your case.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: My share of the vote was not three per cent.

Hon Ray Halligan: What was it? Four per cent.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: No, it was not four per cent. It was rather higher than that. How many votes did Hon Ray Halligan receive? Two hundred? Hon Ray Halligan receives about 200 votes -

Hon Barry House: What about the people who vote above the line?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: What about the people who vote above the line? The reality is that I received many more votes than Hon Ray Halligan, so he should not point at me. I probably received more than 100 times the vote of Hon Ray Halligan. That story is no good; the member should forget it. It is just nonsense.

**HON JOHN FISCHER** (Mining and Pastoral) [2.13 pm]: This is a misleading, even a deceitful piece of legislation. There are no provisions for entrenchment in this Bill. Entrenchment is intended to be a safeguard

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against political manipulation by the governing body. It is a universally accepted principle which applies to major aspects of electoral change. Section 13 of the Electoral Distribution Act requires that changes of the Act receive an absolute majority in both Houses of Parliament. The Labor Party has not included entrenchment provisions in this legislation. By repealing the Electoral Distribution Act rather than amending it, the Government will not need a constitutional majority in this Chamber to bring about the changes. It can then pass this new Bill with the assistance of the Greens (WA), and by sleight of hand it has totally altered the make-up of the Legislative Assembly. In the 1980s, there was a corrupt Labor Government, and now, in 2001, there is deceitful Labor Government, and it has taken only six months.

The Premier is on record as saying that any constitutional changes should be made by the people, through the process of referendum. Why, then, has he not gone to the people on this? The Labor Party was very quiet about one vote, one value during the election; in fact, it did not show its hand. The Government has justified this sleight of hand by saying it has a mandate. I disagree strongly. The Government was elected with only 37 per cent of the vote. Perhaps the Government is not good with figures. For the uninformed, a majority would be any number over 50 per cent. Even at 50 per cent, this could not be called a mandate. It could perhaps be called a majority, but certainly not a mandate. These figures mean that 63 per cent of the voting population of Western Australia voted for other parties that did not have one vote, one value as part of their electoral promise.

Hon Dee Margetts: Are you sure of that?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: Yes, I am.

Hon Dee Margetts: The Greens (WA) have one vote, one value as a policy, as do the Australian Democrats.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: There are no Democrats in this Parliament.

Hon Dee Margetts: Are you sure of your figures?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: Did the Greens (WA) have one vote, one value as a policy?

Hon Dee Margetts: Yes, we did.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: It must have been very much on the back page, because it was certainly not put out to the public in any way that made people aware of it. I am sure that the Greens (WA) would not even have achieved the vote it did in the Agricultural Region if the voters had known they backed one vote, one value. In fact, I doubt very much, had it come out, that they would even have bothered to stand in the Agricultural Region. As Hon Jim Scott has just said, the Greens did not bother to stand a candidate in the by-election of Merredin, as they were aware it would be a total waste of time.

On the subject of election promises, the people of the goldfields were assured that, if the Labor Party came to power, they would always have two members in Parliament. Now it appears that that has been forgotten, and two members become one - a wondrous sleight of hand again. The Minister for Electoral Affairs could well be called the minister for magicians. He could teach the average magician a thing or two. We should ask him what other legislation he wishes to slip into Parliament in this fashion. He is well known for sleight of hand tactics. He sought to change the electoral system when he was in opposition. In 1994, the Labor Party challenged the constitutional validity of the Western Australian electoral system in the High Court. Fortunately, the presiding judges did not agree with the Labor Party, and found that country vote weighting is fair. Logic, therefore, suggests that this Bill is not fair.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: I do not think they found that. The court found that the legal arguments put forward were not sustainable.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: I accept that, and suggest that therefore, the legal arguments put forward in this case are not logical. The Minister for Electoral Affairs, however, had not given up on the motion.

The Government claims that one vote, one value has been a policy of the Labor Party for 100 years, and yet we heard Hon George Cash, in an eloquent speech to the Council on Tuesday, 18 October, produce enough quotes from a 1947 *Hansard* to totally disprove that. This Government does not have a mandate from Labor supporters, let alone the general public. The people do not want this legislation. A recent poll, quoted in *The West Australian* on 17 July 2001, stated that only 33 per cent of respondents supported this Bill. That is less than the percentage of primary votes the Government achieved in the last election. Fifty-one per cent of Labor voters support the current system, and only 42 per cent support one vote, one value. Clearly the Government does not have any mandate whatsoever. We all believe that we live in a democracy. In deciding whether we live in a democracy we should determine whether the will of the people underlies the authority to govern. The people do not want one vote, one value. The Government does not, therefore, have the authority to pass this Bill. Why does the public not support the Bill? It wants a fair and equitable system. Under this new legislation 42 seats of the 57 seats in the Assembly would barely cover 0.2 per cent of the total area of the State.

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Hon J.A. Scott: It has not voted equitably.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: I am well aware of that. The Western Australian public is not stupid. They know that Western Australia is a special place. They are aware of the vast differences between rural communities. They understand the importance of those communities to the economic wellbeing of Western Australia and Australia as a whole. They are not that mean spirited that they would wish rural communities to be underrepresented. This Bill enhances totally the principle of centralisation in every sense of the word. Western Australia has one of the most centralised populations of anywhere in the world, with over 75 per cent of the population living in Perth, even though the State of Western Australia covers one-third of Australia's landmass. This is a unique situation that cannot be compared with the situation in the United Kingdom or the United States. This Bill will further centralise power. Parliamentary representation in Western Australia needs to be unique to reflect the unique demographics of Western Australia.

The general public does not place its trust in modern communication systems to the same extent that the Government does.

Hon J.A. Scott: What do you propose it should be?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: I am certainly against the changes that are being proposed on that side of the House.

Hon Dee Margetts: Are you against any changes at all?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: Not at all, but I am against the changes proposed by that side of the House at this time. To suggest that modern technology can compensate for lack of representation is absurd. This assumes that everyone has a disposable income and an infrastructure that allows them to have access to a computer with Internet access. Approximately 14 per cent of electors in rural areas are Aboriginal, who clearly do not have access to the Internet.

The Government has repeatedly said that it is people who vote, and not trees and cows. It has said that land area should not be a factor in determining the boundaries of an electorate, but rather the number of people. Why then is the Government using a mathematical formula in certain seats in the Assembly; that is, if an electorate is greater than 10 000 square kilometres, a special formula will apply. It is now okay to have size as a factor? Quite frankly, it is totally hypocritical.

Rural Western Australia is a major contributor to the wealth of this State. In 1999-2000 the total value of mineral and energy products in Western Australia was \$21.2 billion, and the agricultural sector returned some \$4.6 billion.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Are you suggesting there should be a property qualification?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: Not at all. I will be responding to that suggestion.

In return for this contribution to our State, the Government wishes to reduce country representation in Parliament. Rural Western Australians are major contributors to this State, yet they are being penalised by this legislation. I reflect on the comments made recently at a Kimberley ward meeting held in Katherine by the member for Pilbara, Larry Graham. He is steeped in the traditions of the Labor Party and, indeed, until recently he held the most secure Labor Party seat in this State. I might add that it has now been converted to an absolutely secure independent fiefdom. I believe the gist of Larry Graham's comments were that if this legislation is passed, the most productive resource region of Western Australia will lose the bulk of its parliamentary representation, which is already minuscule. The question must be posed: why would the residents of Western Australia living above the twenty-sixth parallel -

Hon Ken Travers: That does not include you, does it?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: It does.

Hon Ken Travers: When did you move there?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: My family has always had property there. The member can look at it any time he likes. I was a Carnarvon shire councillor, and I lived there for a great deal of my life. The member should not tell me about the bush, because I do not think he has ever been north of Wanneroo. He would get lost without a road map.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I will call Hon Ken Travers next if he wants to make a speech, otherwise he will let us listen to Hon John Fischer.

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Hon JOHN FISCHER: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. Why would the residents of Western Australia living above the twenty-sixth parallel not petition for a separately administered region, in other words a separate State? The only resource lacking would be people, and that would be in quantity, certainly not quality. The wealth generated in this region would be larger than that generated in the States of South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. There can be no argument about the region's economic viability.

Hon J.A. Scott: Are you saying it should be based on wealth?

Hon JOHN FISCHER: No, it should be based on fairness, not equity. If representatives of this Parliament implement this legislation, I for one will certainly lend support and sympathy to the genuine concerns and requirements of the people of my electorate. This Government and previous Governments have returned precious little of the resource revenues to the areas that generate this State's wealth.

Hon Dee Margetts: Except by state agreement Acts. Most of the projects in your area would fall flat without public support from the general taxpayer.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: My only reply to that is that they certainly would not have any support from the green movement. One has only to look at stage two of the project in the Kimberley, and what the Greens are trying to do there. However, that is another question.

The resource revenues of that area virtually keep this State going; there is no doubt about that whatsoever. The Government should wake up or it will find there is a very moral and genuine movement to divide this State and remove the cancerous growth of the metropolitan area from the hardworking and genuine Australians in our northern regions. The advantages to the people of my electorate would be great. There would be no Gallop, no McGinty, and a distinct lack of academics, but literally a vault of people who know the problems at the coalface. Dr Gallop's dream world of a socialist utopia does not exist north of the twenty-sixth parallel, as indeed it does not for the people of Merredin.

If this Government is so concerned about fair representation, it should do something about the preferential voting system. I will give an example from my electorate. In the last state election a breach occurred that erodes the democratic principle that one vote is worth one value. If the Government is serious about representative voting, it needs to address the current system which allowed one vote to have more than one value. This anomaly occurred in the third schedule of vote counting, not tested previously, in the Mining and Pastoral Region. I have already described this to the House, but I will summarise it. During the vote counting of the third schedule a preference was passed on from successful candidates that was incorrectly inflated in excess of the value of one.

Hon J.A. Scott: They have done that at every election.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: The member should have a good hard look at what happened. The effect of that process was that Hon Jon Ford's surplus votes were given a value of 1.86, Hon Norman Moore's were given a value of 1.63, and Hon Tom Stephens' were given a value of 1.43. That is a blatant travesty of justice. It calls into question the validity of this House.

Hon J.A. Scott: You are saying that country voters should have a vote with a value four times that of a city vote.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: I am not saying that. The member should read this speech. This legislation calls into question the validity of any legislation passed by a majority of one. It presents the opportunity for legal challenges. The Government is aware of this anomaly, yet it will do nothing to redress the wrong. The Government does not have the courage to sort out this anomaly, even though it is aware of its existence. Members opposite talk about fairness, but they will not do anything to fix the situation in this Council. While speaking on the merits of one vote, one value in 1997, Dr Gallop said that if people have the right to vote, that right cannot be qualified, compromised or diminished. It has already been compromised. The Labor Party is all rhetoric and no real action. Members opposite talk about equal representation, but they support a system that allows one counted vote to equal 1.86. That is gross hypocrisy.

We have heard Mr McGinty say that, with modern transport and communication, voters should embrace equality in electoral laws. Today we have mobile telephones, the Internet, better roads and airline travel. However, several things have happened in the not too distant past to illustrate the fragility of our modern communications. The collapse of Ansett Australia, which serviced remote communities in Western Australia, effectively cut off many remote communities. Services in remote areas are not comparable with those in the metropolitan area. That is a fact. Services will continue to deteriorate if parliamentary representation is reduced.

This State Government is not interested in rural communities. If it were, it would have come to the immediate assistance of Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd instead of dragging its feet. It put \$5 million into tourism. We are talking about basic air access to remote communities - access to medical treatment, mail transport and much-needed

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spare parts for our rural and mining communities. Allocating that money to the tourism industry is putting the cart before the horse. A viable airline is required before we can consider tourism incentives.

Hon J.A. Scott: I thought you were against socialism.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: I am.

Hon J.A. Scott interjected.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: It was not necessary to do it in that way. It could have assisted Skywest. Sometimes the requirements of the people of this State go beyond Hon Jim Scott's restricted ideologies.

The State Government cut road funding in the state budget from \$800 million to \$720 million. Obviously, it does not intend to improve access to and from country areas. The collapse of One.Tel illustrates the fragility of the mobile communications business. The attack on New York by terrorists highlights the fragility of our global community. The only true access to Parliament for country people is face-to-face dialogue with their representatives. All other forms of communication are subject to breakdown. As a member representing the Mining and Pastoral Region, I understand the tyranny of distance better than most. I understand how difficult it is to get around an electorate, particularly since the demise of Ansett. Not being a minister, I cannot afford to hire a plane. The distances are so great that the type of plane required is too expensive. I can drive around my electorate, and I do. However, I would never be in Parliament if I did not rely on Ansett or Qantas. Who can I rely on now? Qantas will assist, but it will not solve the problem, because 46 per cent of rural Western Australia was serviced only by Ansett. Skywest will help, but it will not fill the void left by the collapse, certainly not in the short term.

This legislation is another kick in the guts for remote and rural Western Australia. I do not believe this Government takes enough care of people in rural and regional areas. This Bill is a testament to that. The collapse of Ansett has made rural people even more remote from Perth. This Government is seeking to exacerbate that situation by further reducing their representation in Parliament. Perhaps that is what the Labor Party has always wanted; that might suit its purpose. The Labor Party is not well supported in the bush, and it is seeking to redress that by disfranchising those who live there. It is serving its own ends with this legislation. This is not about fairness; it is about Labor self-interest. Labor's true goal is to ensure its position in government at the expense of rural Western Australia. This Bill will give an electoral advantage to the Labor Party. The public and the Opposition do not want it, and the Greens (WA) want only part of it. Only the Labor Party wants it, for its own ends. It has nothing to do with fairness. The Labor Party is seeking to look after its members of Parliament so they can enjoy the power and privileges of this place. One Nation will vote against this Bill in all its forms.

**HON DEE MARGETTS** (Agricultural) [2.38 pm]: I have not spoken on this issue to date because it has been a long process. I wanted to be more settled in my own mind about where the Greens (WA) stand on this issue. It will not be a betrayal of any secret if I tell members that this issue has caused great angst within the Greens, especially for those of us who represent regional Western Australia. It has not been a particularly joyous issue for me, because I realise the level of distress and concern in regional Western Australia and in my own region.

I have spoken to groups in my region on a number of occasions and I have had extensive correspondence and many telephone calls. When talking with people about this issue, I have discovered that the information they have obtained is different from reality. Someone rang me two days ago to express his concern. Halfway through the conversation he said that the Greens should support a model in the upper House similar to that in the Senate. I replied, "It is funny that you should suggest that, because it is exactly what the Greens' proposal seeks to achieve - that is, to balance a change in the lower House with a recognition of the larger seats with regional representation in the upper House." He said that nothing he had read explained that. He said he would vote for the Greens if we pursued that line in this place. It is interesting that in e-mails and letters and when speaking to people in person, I find that the representations made to people about what the Greens (WA) are trying to do with this legislation to find that balance is different from our position. I do not know whether that is because members on both sides of this Chamber have their reasons for wanting to put forth their views or whether they are protecting their own positions.

Although it has not been a joyous issue for me, I could not find a situation of comfort in doing nothing. There are several reasons for that. The Greens' overarching principle is of a participatory democracy. The core principle and one of the four pillars of a democracy is participation. That is the reason that people ask why the Greens support one vote, one value, because our view is not necessarily the same as the Government's. They ask why we are giving a concession to the larger electorates and why we are voting for a different system of representation in the upper House. There is tension between the attempt to have a fairer, more consistent system in the lower House and the need to balance it with a system of regional equity. In trying to find that balance

there are potentially competing principles, as there are in every issue we deal with. This area has been difficult for us and for our supporters. I acknowledge also that it is extremely distressing for many people in regional Australia.

An analysis of the arguments that people have made indicates that they have made them very strongly. A large part of the argument is a belief that regional Australia has been forgotten. The issues of concern for regional people are that they do not have banks any more; they are treated badly by big institutions; the supermarkets have given them up for dead; they are losing small businesses, services and schools; and they are being depopulated and losing the resources that go with those populations. One need look only at the analysis of the national competition policy by the former industry commission - now the Productivity Commission - to see that the very large corporate lobby groups in Australia believed it was only an issue of economic rationalism and that it was inefficient to provide those resources. That is not a position shared by the Greens.

National competition policy was implemented by a Labor Government and supported nationally not only by a Liberal Opposition but by the National Party at both federal and state levels. I imagine that few members in this House understand national competition policy, all of the ramifications that go with it and how it links up with corporate globalisation. I have a limited understanding of it, although I have completed a master's thesis in it. That does not make me a world expert, but since being a member of the Senate I have sought a greater understanding of it. I therefore have a better understanding of it than most.

I imagine that most members in this House do not understand the essence of what is irking regional Australia. It is true that most people in regional WA believe that it is something to do with the urban-region divide. I believe reality is different. Professions, manufacturing workers, service unions, small business and others are now beginning to recognise the common ground. The dialogue between them, I am pleased to say, is beginning in Western Australia. The perception that this malaise is simply an urban-rural divide that requires greater numbers of parliamentarians is beginning to be clarified. I do not say that everybody understands the issue. I am concerned that instead of dealing with the issue of asset sales, increasing headworks charges and the greater difficulty for regional communities to protect their own quality of life, we spend far too much time in this Parliament and in the federal Parliament concentrating on scapegoat issues of crime, refugees, Aboriginals and minority groups. Instead of using diversionary tactics dealing with side issues, as has been repeated throughout the history of the world, Governments should be dealing with the causes for the feelings of abandonment and stress suffered by many people in regional Australia. Governments have chosen to accept external changes, many of which I believe are associated with economic globalisation and which are not entirely in the control of Governments. In Australia we have gone along with that. We have jumped in with two feet saying, "Give it to us, give it to us now." It is not only conservative regional parliamentarians who have jumped in with two feet, including many Labor conservative regional parliamentarians, but also many of the so-called representatives of the organisations that exist to represent issues in regional WA. They have done that in the past and continue to do it.

Hon M.J. Criddle: What is the alternative?

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I will get to that.

The Liberal Party, the Labor Party, the National Party, the Western Australian Farmers Federation and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association have jumped into the free market agenda. Many members of the Farmers Federation have concerns about the so-called free trade agenda. They also have concerns about the national competition policy, the intellectual property regime, the changes to the rules for the importation of cooked chicken meat and pork meat, and the importation of plant, animal and fish diseases through a reduction in import standards. However, these are all matters that are part of the free market package. I have heard both federal and state parliamentarians rant and rave about these issues without understanding that they were part of the original decision by those who dropped the ball on behalf of their constituents. There are people who supposedly represent regional Western Australia - including people in the National Party and, I am sad to say, the leadership of the Farmers Federation - who continue to believe that the proper way of dealing with those issues is to blame the messenger. That means that they are dealing with electoral reform issues but not with issues relating to genetically modified organisms, globalisation, national competition policy and the real impacts that those issues are having on the producers of Western Australia. Instead of dealing with the needs of producers and other people in the community for a greater say and a greater part in the process of, for instance, the introduction of genetically modified organisms, members have changed the subject to say that the whole issue is about electoral reform. It is not. It is about equality of representation. If that is not happening with conservative parliamentarians, having more or even the same number of parliamentarians will not help.

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Ultimately I had to make a decision based on what I believed was a fair balance between these matters. If the issue is about the impact of a range of these external economic changes, lack of services, centralisation, economic rationalisation or the power of corporations, banks, shopping centres, insurance companies and other global corporations, including the Juventas and Monsanto of this world, then my belief is that people in regional Western Australia are not getting fair representation from parliamentarians who purport to be representing those issues. Giving them more parliamentarians or retaining the same number will not help that situation one iota. What needs to happen in this Parliament, and in the other Parliaments in Australia, is for parliamentarians to catch up with what the community itself is saying. If members listen to television programs such as *Australia Talks*, they will hear a theme coming through of a greater recognition of some of the real causes of that malaise. I realise that there are issues of distance for regional Western Australia. There is absolutely no doubt that Western Australia is a special case because of its distances. I was asked by interjection earlier why the Greens opted for the Queensland model, or a version of it, in the lower House. It is exactly for that reason. Once areas in the Mining and Pastoral Region and a couple of areas in the Agricultural Region get past 10 000 square kilometres, there is a check and balance in relation to the size, because the size of the electorate determines the number of notional electors. That does not solve the problem of size. There is no doubt that distance and communication are major issues, but they will not necessarily be solved by having more parliamentarians. As it is, parliamentarians find it difficult to get around their entire electorate if there are small towns of 150 people, or even fewer, within their electorate.

State parliamentarians have 1.4 staff. Our staff do not have the ability to travel on our behalf. We have one office provided. The reality is that if a member has a large electorate, that member must locate somewhere. Inevitably, if that member locates in an area that provides the greatest access to his constituents, because of the sheer distances involved a range of people will not be able to access that member easily. None of the issues at which people are looking will solve that problem, nor will it mean that someone who is on the edge of an electorate will suddenly have a parliamentarian in his town.

Hon M.J. Criddle: This legislation will mean that they are twice as far away.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: Some electorates are much larger. I understand that. That, for me, has been the hardest issue with which to grapple. I still do not feel joyous about it. However, it is not a matter of just going to a fete or opening an event. That is important, and obviously people want to access a member's office. However, let us face it, generally it is the people who are close to the area in which a member's office is located who can do that on a regular basis. It is an issue of whether there is a recognition that the work of parliamentarians is, as has been mentioned, often a matter of trying to fill in the gaps in those things that the bureaucracy cannot or will not do and that the public service and Governments, in a range of ways, cannot or will not provide for people. That becomes more important the further away a member is from the Perth metropolitan area. That issue must be recognised in the allocation of resources - not in pay for parliamentarians, but the fact that a member cannot send a staffer to a function to listen to what is said and to report back. There is no provision for that in the budget. There is no ability to have an office in more than one place. A member cannot even fund an office in another place and have one of his allocated staff, or part of his allocated staff, located there. These issues must be addressed by an inquiry.

It is true that not everyone will feel joyous about the outcome. Anyone who feels he has lost something he had before, along with coping with all the changes under economic rationalism, will feel aggrieved. I understand that. However, much of the emphasis of some of the people who should have been representing their regional constituents on a range of issues has been on killing the messenger. The Greens (WA) are saying that we must deal with some of the fundamental problems associated with the changes to economic globalisation, but the major parties are not listening. Instead of blaming those concerns on electoral reform - whether it involves the Liberal Party, the National Party, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association or the Western Australian Farmers Federation - it is about time some of the real issues that are the basis of that feeling of malaise were addressed. That will not happen unless all the parties, including the major political parties, realise they have an obligation to act.

Some people have tried to mix the gay and lesbian issue with this issue. In the campaign in regional Western Australia, some people are trying to say that the two issues are linked. The statistics indicate that there are likely to be just as many gay and lesbian people - perhaps those who are born gay and lesbian - in regional Western Australia, but they possibly do not have basic human rights. Statistics show that there is a concern in regional Western Australia about suicides among young people. Perhaps some of those issues involve the lack of human rights, and a lack of recognition of basic human rights, in regional Western Australia. Some of the loss of population may relate to some of those issues. It is not a rural-urban divide on gay and lesbian issues. However, the two issues are not connected.



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I will deal with another interesting issue that may arise after this debate is concluded. The Greens have said all along that any party that finds itself holding the balance of power should have the resources to do its job properly. In the past couple of days, one minister was angry because the Greens' amendments were not ready when he wanted to deal with a particular Bill. He planned to push through the debate in committee, but my amendments had not been circulated because we did not have the resources to allow us to be as prepared as we would have liked to be. From the beginning we said that we would need some resourcing to enable us to do the job that people expect us to do in this position of responsibility.

We have not received answers to letters that we wrote months ago requesting resources. If this Bill goes through, it would be interesting if we suddenly got a letter from the Government saying, "Gosh, we have thought about your issue, and we have decided to give you these resources." Would that not be interesting? People are asking what is in it for the Greens. After this debate, would it not be interesting if the minister responsible for this legislation, or the Premier, suddenly thought, "I've got a good way of getting at the Greens. I'll give them what they want. They have asked for extra resources to do their job. I'll let them have those resources"? Can members imagine how many people in the media would believe that the two things were not related?

Hon Ray Halligan: Shouldn't we all get the same resources?

Hon DEE MARGETTS: Possibly, yes.

Hon Ray Halligan interjected.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: The Liberal Party already has them. All sorts of people have tried to find ulterior motives in the way the Greens have gone about this. They have tried to connect our position with something in other legislation. I predict that it might be tempting for the Government to say, "Let's get the Greens. They have given us some pain with this legislation. They have insisted on equity and balance, and on giving regional Western Australia a fair go in the Legislative Council. Let's give them a little more pain. If this Bill goes through, let's announce that we have suddenly taken notice of their letters of months ago, and we are going to make resources available to them."

Hon Ray Halligan: They are a bunch of pussy cats. They have given in to you all along.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: Yes? It is a very vexed issue. The Greens have insisted that the legislation be checked by the court so that there can be no doubt that the mechanism that the Government has used is legally acceptable. The fact that the Clerk has taken that step is encouraging. However, the reality is that the Greens have insisted on that all along. As members have seen in the report, having the legislation checked in the courts is something with which the Greens agreed. It was the Greens' position in the first place and something on which we have insisted all along. It has been a very difficult situation. If people in general understood -

Hon Barry House: Did the member not go to a meeting in the country and make a statement about a referendum?

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I was asked a question in Lake Grace by one person on a panel who happened to be a Liberal. He asked me whether I would support a referendum. I said that I always believed that this process should have some form of legitimacy.

Hon Frank Hough: The member ducked, dived and weaved.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I said that I always believed that the process should have some form of legitimacy. It would have legitimacy if a court decided that the process used by the Government to arrive at the outcome was legal. I have talked about this at some length with my colleagues. One issue is a reflection on the Government: it has done very little work in the community to argue the case. The initial response of the minister to the Greens' proposal for a balance in the upper House was that the Greens only wanted two extra members in the upper House. That is what the minister said - that we just want two extra members. The Government did not argue the case of electoral reform during the election campaign. Everybody knew it was in its platform. It was not hiding its policy. The Government has not argued its case since then. The Government did not argue its case in the committee stage. Because of the lack of work by the Government and because people have thrown scorn on the Greens in its attempt to find a balance, the Government has not argued for the reasonableness of the Greens' position in the upper House. The community has never had a chance to see the whole argument. When it is explained to people on a one-to-one basis many people who think they do not like what we are proposing realise that what they hear is exactly what they would like to see. The process has never had a fair hearing.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): Order, members! Hon Dee Margetts has the floor.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: The opportunity for a fulsome community debate has been squandered by the Government. We had to decide whether that squandering was such that further efforts to obtain a balance would

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be squandered as well. It has been a difficult personal decision. The Greens believe that the best outcome is to allow the courts to tell us whether the process is legitimate. That position is supported by the other side of the House. It is our responsibility to work with the people of regional Western Australia and the people of Western Australia in general to work through the issues that have created anger. I hope that those who want to wring my neck in the next few months or years will give me the opportunity to present the whole case. When people in the regions feel distressed I hope they have the opportunity of hearing what the Greens believe are the issues. I hope they get the opportunity of having quality representation. No political system can guarantee quality representation. When people who are worried about having less representation are asked whether their parliamentarians are representing them well on a range of issues one receives a different answer from whether they want less parliamentarians. The issue and challenge for all of us is to prove that we are interested in regional Western Australia. By that I mean all regions - urban and rural. If we do not understand what are the real issues and what is the real basis for anger and urban malaise it is high time we found out.

**HON W.N. STRETCH** (South West) [3.06 pm]: It gives me no pleasure having to debate this issue again. This issue was debated in the mid 1980s with similar results. Very much the same arguments were used. The Labor Party had a bumper sticker campaign: let the people decide. That bumper sticker was on every Labor Party car in the parliamentary car park. Labor members were screaming out for a referendum on the issue. They were similarly screaming out for land rights. In both instances, when the Bills were defeated, the then Premier Brian Burke was heard to say, "Thank God for the Legislative Council" They were on a loser both ways.

Once again we have two electoral Bills presented to us as an exercise in pedantry, philosophy, definition and ethical interpretation. Statisticians and mathematicians have added their two bob's worth on behalf of each of the political parties and many other vested interests. All the small-politics people are represented. What is before us now? We have a witch's brew of classic proportions. The House will forgive me if I delve very briefly and shallowly into the classics. The House has heard some learned treatises on democracy and the Greek derivation of the word. I will not go much further into that, suffice to say that the noble sentiment of democracy, which we have inherited from ancient Greece, has undergone all sorts of changes down the ages.

During the electoral debate in the 1980s members did research on the forms of democracy found in the so-called free world and came up with 13 different definitions. The House will be glad to know that I have lost my notes from that earlier debate. Hon Dee Margetts used the phrase "participative democracy". Democracy is represented in many countries in Asia. All that is needed there is to have a Government and an Opposition and one has a democracy. Then again the quality and quantity of some oppositions are questionable. I have had discussions with some leaders at some of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meetings, who were very willing to talk about their neighbour's lack of democracy. One person said, "Yes, we are a very democratic country; of course we have an opposition. It consists of one person and he is a very fine opponent and does an excellent job of putting the views of the minority." Another person said, "We have an Opposition but it is totally unruly so they are mostly under house arrest or in jail, but it is still a democracy and they do not really give the Government much trouble." Democracy is somewhat of an overworked and misunderstood word.

We must look deeper than at just the Greek word. The ancient Greeks are dead and buried and are not here to defend the original intent of terms. Some learned works have been sustained in literature. However, through the years, they have been subject to interpretation by various scholars. Some of them have taken on a rather interesting turn. We must be a little bit wary of democracy, although it is a wonderful theory. It is a bit like the world court that is supposed to guarantee justice for everybody. It is also a bit like universal peace on which Hon John Fischer made some interesting observations. The world court is fine as long as someone is strong enough to enforce its findings at the end of the day. Where do we turn for an enforcement agency? We turn to the best armed and best prepared of the nations around the world.

Another scholar on whose works I am rather keen is William Shakespeare. When I looked at this concoction of legislation, the unfortunate Hamlet came to mind. He was a somewhat mixed up character. These days he would have been taken to a psychoanalyst before he was five, which would have ensured that he was a total nutter before he was 10. Shakespeare managed to put him into a very notable work of literature. His comments on the death of Polonius came to mind. Looking at the corpse of the murdered Polonius he said, "a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him." Here we have the Western Australian Constitution, a body with a convocation of people gradually dismembering and nibbling away at the structure. Unable to do that by constitutional means, the dirty-tricks brigade was called in. They are the people who ask how they can get around this constitutional issue. Our founding fathers did their best and set up a Constitution to safeguard against this type of hanky-panky. However, a very clever collection of backroom boys has been working on this for many years. In 1980-86 there was Graham Hawks, who was probably one of the best manipulators of figures and people I have had the misfortune to know. There was also McMullin, Smith, Cook and Hon John Cowdell

in his earlier life, who I will say, despite his absence, is probably one of the shrewdest political brains on the scene currently.

When these deals are done, the minor parties that participate always come off second best. I think Hon Norman Moore and Hon Tom Stephens were here -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You were here.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: So I was. We were here when proportional representation was introduced into the Parliament. Hon Joe Berinson, the then Leader of the House, gave an assurance to the National Party that it would be well looked after in that deal and that it would retain its representation. The Liberal Party and Hon Mick Gayfer did not believe him. We said they should not believe Mr Berinson's figures, and talked it through on reasonably amicable terms with the National Party leadership, warning that the National Party would lose a seat. However the National Party leadership said it would not lose a seat because Hon Joe Berinson and Graham Hawks had assured it that it would not. They said that they sat down together and worked out the figures and thought that they would be right. What happened? The National Party lost a seat. Mick Gayfer was devastated. He saw it all happening. He asked that he not be called a member of the National Party because he was born a Country Party member and would die a Country Party member. I think he will. I saw him the other day and he looked as though he was far from dying.

Hon M.J. Criddle: He is doing all right.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: He still regrets that day as one of the saddest in the Country Party's history.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: How many more have they lost since then?

Hon W.N. STRETCH: They have not gained many. I caution the Greens (WA); they should be very careful. They are up against some of the most astute political operators in Australia - probably as shrewd as any in the world. It is no secret that Britain sends many people here to talk to the conservative and Labor sides of politics so that they can hone up their political skills in preparation for campaigning and electioneering in Britain.

We are told that parties do not do deals; they have earnest discussions and meaningful deliberations.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: We reach negotiated agreements.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: That is another good phrase. I will take that at face value and the other leg plays Waltzing Matilda! Whatever term we use, I warn members, to use a classical phrase that I do not want translated too literally, if we deal with the devil, we should be careful what we get in the end. It is a bit like the poorest man at the poker table - he should count not only his shekels but also his fingers because he will be done like a dinner. When 50 or 60 people are playing five, the five should be very wary because their chances of winning are remote.

Hon Robin Chapple: They are even tougher.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: I hope they are because they will need to be. The minor parties have a major job ahead if they intend to reform the Labor Party to be fair electorally. Whether they have "done a deal" is for others to decide. I have my opinion and I will leave it at that.

I know it shows, but I am a country boy at heart and always have been. Generations behind me have been country boys and girls.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You are one of the few on the opposition benches.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: I thank the minister for that and take it as a compliment.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: It was meant to be a compliment.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: That is very kind. However, it does not mean that I do not understand what takes place in the city around here. The reforms in 1986 delivered to this Parliament an undemocratic House. I say that because proportional representation takes the bulk of the people out of the deal. When I was a student dabbling a little in politics, under the illusion that my fellow students and I were running the world, we joked about the 36 faceless men behind the Labor Party. They are still there, and they are still reasonably faceless, although they show up in places such as the Parliament courtyard, as they did last night. We saw all the guys who pull the strings. Everyone knows how it works; it is more open than it used to be, and we have television and the like to thank for that. The Liberal Party has its backroom boys too. There is no doubt about that. I am sure that the Greens(WA) have their people of power, and I know that the National Party has some good brains behind it. However, with proportional representation it is these people, in the main, who select the members of Parliament. The old surviving guard that I mentioned earlier had to go out and fight for our votes on the same basis as

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Legislative Assembly members. I believe that you, Mr Deputy President (Hon George Cash), may have come in at that time -

Hon N.D. Griffiths: The Deputy President came in 1989 and before that he was in the Legislative Assembly.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: That is right. The Deputy President would have faced the people and won with the force of his personality and ability. However, how many members do we have now who have gone out on the hustings every time there has been an election in an attempt to win the majority of votes from their electorate? Is that a democracy? Is proportional representation a democracy? I think not. Since 1989 my election has relied not so much on the 130 000 people in the south west as the 50 or so people who position me either one, two or three on the south west ticket. That goes for all of us. Where does our allegiance lie? Where does the bulk of our work go? Do our 131 000 voters, or more, come to Parliament House for drinks, lunch and the like in the courtyard? Is it free drinks all round for them? Not on your nelly. Do the various councils of a party select our position on the tickets, virtually ensuring us a feather-bedded ride into Parliament? Members can answer that question for themselves.

Members should not come into this Chamber and go on with this claptrap about democratic processes and a democratic House. We are mostly pawns of our party machines. There is a certain noble brutality about Legislative Assembly elections, whether we are talking about first past the post, preferential voting or whatever. There is no question that a Legislative Assembly member goes out into the community and puts his or her neck on the chopping block while the people make their decision. That is not the case here. I understand the concerns of members and some of the parties because what we face now are the hard realities of a better informed and more selective community that is looking for quality and performance in its members. Why is there such disillusionment and cynicism about members of Parliament? Do we ever look at our own systems and at the type of people that we are putting into Parliament? We have all been down in the grassroots, we have all helped to form the machinery that makes all this happen. When we try to defend ourselves against attacks that we are lower than car dealers, lawyers and many other noble professions, we must look very hard at the system we have helped to create and whether we are now reaping the whirlwind.

We must look at why the Labor Party feels compelled to bring in this system of one vote, one value. We have heard all the noble speeches that everybody's vote shall be equal. I have demonstrated that in the process of selection for the Legislative Council we pay lip service to that and no more. The votes of the people out there - the 131 000 people in the south west - are not equal. They are not equal to the selection processes that put their members and the leaders of this State into Parliament to work for the benefit of all people. They are disfranchised now as surely as if we were to push them over a cliff into the sea. The Labor Party knows that its forums are not democratic. It also knows that - it has been widely broadcast - 60 per cent of its voting power is given to the union movement. In the old days that was probably fair because the unions provided most of the membership and money. Now, with falling union membership and financial support, the general cynicism of the public and the difficulty of raising funds to run elections, what can the Labor Party do? It can either go out and fight for its place in the sun or, because it is on a loser, it can decide to somehow shore up its support. How does the Labor Party do that? The safest way to guarantee a shoring up of support is to ensure that it is holding the levers on the gravy train. That is really what this legislation is all about.

I hope that there is still a certain amount of determination by those who stand for Parliament to make the State a better place. I think many people come into this place with that golden idealism. It does not last very long because there is a scramble for places, privilege, and the perks of office. Also, there is inter-party fighting and the so-called controversy across the floor of the Chamber. Do not think that this is not real. In the 1986 electoral reform debate Hon Arthur Tonkin led the charge. He was a passionate and temperamental man and even his colleagues would agree that, at times, he was a difficult person. On the day that the Labor Party decided that it was not on a winner, and that it would compromise one vote, one value, they were just about calling for sawdust outside the caucus room door. The corridor had to be closed because of the shouting, screaming, yelling and the absolute vituperation that was to be heard. This issue of one vote, one value was very dear to Hon Arthur Tonkin's heart. I wish that Hon Jim McGinty, the minister in charge of the Bill in the other place, had that same burning desire. However, I do not see it. I see a far more sinister agenda. Because it knows that it is on the slide, the Government is determined - despite its failings, its 37 per cent performance at the poll, and an eight per cent performance at the Merredin by-election, the worst poll in the Labor Party's history since 1904 or 1905 - to guarantee a way of bolstering its support above 50 per cent to give it a better than 50 per cent chance of winning every election. Not even Arthur Tonkin at his most vituperative would have considered that agenda honourable. There is nothing honourable about this agenda. The damage that this legislation will cause is not so much the transfer of country seats to the city as the total disregard for and the degrading attitude demonstrated towards people in the bush.

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My elder brother's wife, as a schoolchild, was one of the last people repatriated from Sumatra before the Japanese marched in. She got out on the last ship with her mother and sisters, and her elder brother, father and grandmother stayed behind, because there was not room for everybody. The 70-year-old grandmother survived the war, and I had the privilege of speaking to her before she died - she lived well into her nineties. She said that the internment and the hardship were bearable, but the indignity was not.

The Government is stripping country people of their dignity. The Labor Party and the Greens (WA) - the unholy convocation of politic worms - is saying that country people do not count, as there are not many of them. They will not deliver any seats to the Labor Party, and they can go to hell. The Labor Party will put the seats back into the city, where there is a better than even chance of manipulating the figures to obtain enough seats to virtually guarantee Labor Government. If the Labor Party is good enough, it can get out into the country and win in its own right.

Hon Kim Chance is very highly regarded in country areas. Before the election people said to me that he was a fine fellow, and asked where we got him. I told them he was the Labor Party member for the Agricultural Region, and they would not believe he was not a National Party or Liberal Party member. They would say that he sounded like a Liberal.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You are being very tough on Hon Kim Chance. He does not deserve that treatment.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: He will not mind. He is one of the few members on the government side who have seen life at the coalface.

Hon N.F. Moore: Some would say that about Hon Nick Griffiths.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: Yes, he is a decent chap. I say that without wishing to do his political career any harm. We can negotiate with Hon Nick Griffiths, and I think he keeps his word. We have had many reasonable men in the Labor Party over the years. Hon Fred McKenzie had his leader Brian Burke come up here and tell him to call off pairs. He refused to do it, saying the Premier had no authority in this House. McKenzie said that if Burke insisted on breaking pairs he would leave the Chamber himself when the vote was called. That is the honour we expect from Labor Party members, and I hope they get it from us. I believe they get it from the National Party. Then the Government comes up with these stunts that degrade the process and have been seen in the bush for what they are. Members opposite should think that through, because in the Merredin by-election the Liberal Party campaigned very hard on one vote, one value and the lowering of the age of consent for homosexual boys to sixteen. They were two of the key issues put to country people by the Liberal Party. The Labor Party wonders why its candidate put in the worst performance since 1905. The genuine people on the government side have some hard soul-searching to do.

I am sorry that Hon Nick Griffiths and Hon Ed Dermer - two of the better performers and the most obvious men of honour and conscience in the Labor Party - are the only two government members in the House. It is probably not worth calling a quorum, but other members should be here.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: I do not think you should call a quorum, because you are making your speech and we are listening. It will be afternoon tea time soon.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is the Government's Bill, so it should make sure its members are in the House.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: Yes - it is a disgrace.

I hope I have demonstrated a little bit of the background to this business. No-one believes the Government out there.

It seems that the only two government members in the House are now busy sorting out their numbers. I will just rearrange my notes.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Talk to us. We are listening. It is a very good speech.

Hon W.N. STRETCH: It is a bit disjointed, but a lot of issues need to be visited very quickly. I am sorry no Greens are here either, but I hope someone in their rooms is listening, because I will now say a little bit about the people they are dealing with. Something came to my office many years ago. I would not bring it up now, except that it includes information about members who are very active around the Labor Party now. These notes related to a parliamentary Labor Party meeting. They were sent to my office; I did not steal them, nor did they fall off the back of a truck. They turned up in my office. An unnamed person produced an unsigned report of an internal meeting of the Labor Party held when the leadership of the party changed in the early 1990s. It states -

The pressure for change came from elements within the leadership of the left to bring about renewal: primarily from McGinty & Halden; supported by Chris Evans.

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The Right decided they wanted to get Carr out because in his office were the core group of dissident members of the right: Helen Hale, Peter Hatjavasilior, Peter Clough: this group has destabilised the right and ensured the election of a dissident right (Lyn Amore) onto the Admin Committee.

McGinty/Halden had indicated to the Premier that the Left require renewal (read "knifing") of:

Buchanan  
Carr  
Troy  
Berinson  
Thomas

Members should bear in mind that this is the same Mr McGinty who is doing this deal on electoral representation. The Greens (WA) and others should beware. I read further from the document -

Elements of the left met at Parliament House Monday 14th trying to stitch together a renewal proposal that would work: they could not agree on who was to replace Buchanan: desired by McGinty, Watson and Catania - and no agreement on who should get it. Larry Graham, Nick Catania, Fred McKenzie, Jim Brown, Frank Donovan, Ian Alexander and Yvonne Henderson are growing increasingly disaffected with the leadership of Halden/McGinty.

I might add, as an aside, that Pam Buchanan was dying of cancer. May she rest in peace. The document continues -

Centre Left met on Monday afternoon 21st at Pearce's office: attended by Hallahan, Troy, Stephens, Ripper & Thomas and agreed to ask the Premier to get Joe Berinson to stay.

Berinson had been for a long while thinking of standing down; recent discussions with the Premier led to him being asked for a departure date. He is at his most vulnerable emotionally with two daughters in Jerusalem. Halden has been using the line that in view of this and the Commission it is best to get Joe to go now and be replaced by Halden.

Julian Grill organised a meeting of the non-aligned (includes Carr, Smith x 2, Leahy, Nevill, Read) at Parliament House : they want Berinson to be retained.

Problems of organisation: Caucus was deferred twice during January because of these tensions: on Tuesday 29th there were many SPLP members away: Edwards, Helm, Brown in Vietnam; McKenzie, Jones, Butler, Cunningham were away in Sydney with a Parliamentary Bowls team - scuttlebutt is rife that the Premier flew Beryl Jones back with a Government supplied charter in order to assist with the numbers: Butler - who was with Jones - was left in Sydney where he was because he told the Premier he did not agree with the plot; Pearce was scheduled to be in Taipei but cancelled.

At the Caucus meeting the coup attempt was muffed right from the start: they did not have two thirds for -

There the type fails at the bottom of the page. Whoever dropped it into my office could have provided a better copy, but this one is not too bad. Over the page it continues -

... tried to second the motion: Jeff Carr had to point out that they had the procedure wrong and had to guide them through the procedural steps necessary to effect his own spill from Cabinet.

Prior to this meeting the Left had met to decide there stance on the spill: 11 for 5 against. Three of those opposed (Donovan, Alexander, Buchanan) then left the meeting: McGinty gained only 7 votes to Catania's 6 votes for left endorsement for the vacant position! If Donovan, Alexander, & Buchanan had stayed Catania would have been the new minister and all McGinty's efforts would have been for nought.

In the vote in CAUCUS: Troy stood for the three vacancies and missed out on being returned to Cabinet by just three votes: i.e. 18 to 23.

Gavan Troy is about to dump a bucket on McGinty: it includes a file prepared from a variety of sources that reveal McGinty's involvement in recent years in industrial relations - there is some suggestion of quasi criminal activity; and also some evidence of his improper meddling in the affairs of other unions. It is understood that Troy will hang onto this material until its damage can be most effective.

Buchanan is going to resign from the Parliament when she turns 55: 6 Feb 1992. She will then be eligible for full pension; her seat of Ashburton will be unwinnable for the ALP in the immediate post-

Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Bruce Donaldson; Hon Jim Scott; Deputy President; Hon John Fischer; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon Bill Stretch

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royal commission climate with a by-election in early 1992. Tom Helm will be told to contest this seat: his loss is anticipated and sought - he was opposed to the Dowding spill and the recent spill.

Troy and Carr are known to be wanting to inflict maximum punishment on Lawrence for her poor handling of them.

Lawrence has still not approached Joe Berinson personally to ask him to stay on: despite claims to Caucus and the media that she has done so.

Berinson is known to be very angry at the removal from Cabinet of Troy and the arrival in Cabinet of Watson.

David Smith considered that his loss of Community Services was punishment and demanded that the Premier include Planning among his portfolios: this was otherwise marked for Wilson. Smith got what he wanted.

Grill and the non-aligned are angry that the country has been stripped of Ministers: and are planning to build the strength of a new group in Caucus to confront the Left/leadership control.

Bridge was thought to be opposed to the spill and when he rose to speak in Caucus was called on the basis that he was speaking against the spill motion: he started his speech with the start of a strong attack on the way that people had now destroyed trust and loyalty with each other but then in mid sentence changed his stance and supported the spill.

The Geraldton, Ashburton and Swan Hills branches have all been shrill in their opposition to the events of the last two weeks. Large numbers of party resignations have been received.

Lawrence has been trying to pacify Troy and Carr and has had Chris Evans, Terry Burke and Keith Wilson approach them.

Lawrence has issued an order which prevents the relocation of the sacked ministers staff without her express approval: Fiona Mitchell, Graham Harman and Helen Hale (PPS's in the sacked ministers offices) are all being blamed for their ministers defiance of the Premier.

Carr's super pay out is understood to be \$750,000; Troy's about \$550,000; Buchanan's somewhat less.

In McGinty's calculations prior to the spill he worked out which Ministers could not afford to kick up a fuss if they were sacked: he made a miscalculation about the super rules and anticipated that Buchanan, Carr and Troy would all hang in. He has not come up to speed with the new super rules: only one condition has to be met out of a list of about ten to make a member eligible for super: eg turned 55 & doctors certificate is understood to be enough.

Many SPLP members now expect opposition will block supply in 1991 during the Royal Commission and force an election: after some of the worst revelations are out during the year.

The ALP Party office (and Stephen Smith) want the State Government to face the polls earlier rather than later (i.e. 1991 is seen as better than 93 or 92) so as to allow the voters an opportunity here in WA (and also in Victoria) to exact their retribution against the ALP and install Liberal Governments and then in turn provide the Federal Keating Labor Government a chance of election in mid 1993. Party Office is working on the basis of certain defeat for ALP at WA level and wants to secure safe seats for "loyal" Left Members and some Ministerial experience for new left team: McGinty/Watson/Halden.

McKenzie is angry at the usurping of his role as convenor of the Left by McGinty/Halden. Donovan or Alexander are thought to be in danger of losing their pre-selections and may as a result join Buchanan (Carr, Troy) on the cross benches as Independents.

[Continued on page 6139.]

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm*