

Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Mr Mick Murray; Dr Kim Hames; Dr Steve Thomas; Mr Tony McRae; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Gary Snook

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 26 April.

MR D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN (Leschenault) [12.17 pm]: This is the first opportunity I have had in a non-adversarial fashion in this house to officially congratulate my colleagues who won office at the last election. I congratulate and welcome all new members to this Parliament.

The member for Bunbury and I have the distinction of representing an area that has one of the most magnificent environmental assets in the state, which is the Leschenault Inlet and Estuary. As anyone who has lived in or visited the area would know, it is a fantastic place, as has just been pointed out by the member for Murray. Whether a person wants to catch a feed of crabs, go fishing or boating or just enjoy the tranquil setting of the magnificent sunsets, there is absolutely nothing quite like the Leschenault area. I am delighted that the new electorate was named after the estuary; it is very fitting.

Last weekend I took some time to jump in my canoe and paddle across the estuary to an area known as The Cut. The area has a nice swell. As I was paddling my canoe there were 10 or 12 dolphins on either side of me surfing and diving through the waves. It reminded me of what a magnificent place we live in. It also reminds me that it is an environment and a lifestyle that we have to do everything possible to protect and enhance.

Residents and visitors to the region have become aware that a fair amount of algal bloom has occurred in a couple of the rivers feeding into the Leschenault Estuary. The Collie and Brunswick Rivers have recently been the subject of a particularly bad algal bloom. Last night my colleague the member for Carine led the debate about the condition of the Swan River. The member for Murray and others pointed out that other river systems in the state are also suffering ill-health from the need for better management, a sensible management plan and significant resources to help protect and nurture those environmental areas. I would argue that the Leschenault Estuary should be at the forefront of our concerns when considering the maintenance and conservation of these magnificent environmental assets in this state.

The Department of Environment advises that the same algae, *Karlodinium micrum*, that has been killing fish in the Swan River has been found in the Collie and Brunswick Rivers. I am not a scientist, but I know that this algae is measured in terms of cells per millilitre, and once it gets to a level of approximately 20 000 cells per millilitre, the danger signs are put up. When it reaches a critical stage, people are not allowed in the water and so forth. We have not reached that stage locally. The testing that was done on 19 April showed a reading of 7 000 cells per millilitre. Fortunately this does not happen very often. I suppose a coincidence of occurrences has resulted in this situation. What happened is that some recent heavy rains did not completely soak into the soil and therefore the nutrient run-off was particularly high. When the weather warmed up, it made for ideal conditions for the algae to multiply, and that is exactly what occurred recently. Once the weather cools off or the rain soaks into the soil, there is not the same nutrient run-off problem and we do not experience the same difficulties with algal blooms that have occurred recently. Just because this does not happen very often and just because the occurrence this time has not resulted in any fish kills is no excuse to turn a blind eye to the growing problems facing our waterways in the south west. I believe this is a warning sign for us all. Old-timers in the region have told me time and again that the condition of our waterways is deteriorating and has been for some years. Things are coming to a head and this latest algal bloom demonstrates that point.

There are also other problems affecting the estuary. As members would be aware, the port of Bunbury is not a natural phenomenon; it is a man-made construction and it splits the estuary area into two bodies, which are generally known locally as the Leschenault Inlet, which is the area in the central business district of Bunbury, and the estuary, which is the larger mass of water predominantly located in the Shire of Harvey. Those two areas are technically one body of water and they should be referred to as the Leschenault Inlet and Estuary, but I will colloquially refer to the larger body of water as the estuary and the smaller body as the inlet. The estuary has suffered significant silting problems over the past decade or so. Vittoria Bay, which is the large area of water to the south of the estuary, does not look anything like it did even 10 years ago. A local resident told me that not so long ago he had managed to walk across Vittoria Bay from one side to the other. I have not heard of that happening before. When we compare aerial maps going back to 1992-93 with maps taken today, we can see that the amount of silt coming through the Preston River system has been phenomenal and is altering the environment of the estuary. The Collie River has also silted up enormously in recent years. Some of the more senior members of our local community tell me they can remember as kids diving off the old Collie River bridge and they were really going to reach the bottom. If a person dived off the bridge now, he would have to be careful not to get stuck in the mud at the bottom. At the end of the Collie River, for most of the tidal phase, people in powerboats have to speed up - exceeding the legal speed limit - to allow them to lift their outboards so

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that they do not drag on the mud as they go out to sea. While that is an inconvenience and a problem for boat owners, it is also a safety hazard, because a lot of children swim at the entrance to the Collie River. It is a beautiful beach area and a lot of kids swim there. Parents like to see their young children swimming there because they perceive it as a very safe area. A lot of local residents are worried that it may be only a matter of time before a very serious accident occurs following the silting up of the river mouth in that area.

I have lost count of the number of times people have come to see me and said that fish stocks are down and that the situation is far worse than it used to be. We had a lot of success under the previous government, which bought out the remaining six professional fishing licences in the estuary and commenced working towards a management plan for recreational fishing in the area, but a lot of work still needs to be done.

Another matter that gets raised from time to time is the increased use of crab traps - not in the estuary; they are not allowed in the estuary - in the ocean close to the estuary to the north of The Cut, where the ocean feeds into the estuary environment. These crab traps are used elsewhere, including in the Mandurah area, and I am told they are absolutely ruthless. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that they are affecting the migration and breeding habits of the crabs that come into the estuary.

It is also acknowledged that a large amount of dam run-off is permitted to go down the river and ultimately into the estuary. In years gone by, that used to scour the river. I am told by people far more experienced in these marine engineering matters than I that this fast-flowing water scours the river, keeps it deep and in turn assists in ensuring that the river environment remains clean and healthy. Over the years, that dam overflow has been cut back and it has affected the estuarine environment, particularly that of the rivers leading into it.

I also wish to pay tribute to all the people in the local community who have constantly lobbied to do something about these growing problems and who had the foresight to recognise that although we have a magnificent environment now, and although all the water tests have proved that the water is abundantly clean and that it is a tremendous marine environment for fish stocks to breed in, it is not as good as it used to be, that problems have arisen and that if we do not take action now, it will be only a matter of time before an environmental disaster occurs. I particularly pay tribute to the members of the Leschenault Inlet and Estuary Restoration Group under the leadership of Graham Baker. That group has fought tirelessly to get politicians from both sides of the fence to acknowledge the extent of the problem and the need for action. However, there is huge disillusionment. Although one side of politics has woken up to the terrible growing problems in the area and at the last election promised some significant support, the other side has remained very quiet. The Liberal Party went to the last election with a \$12 million plan to provide immediate and ongoing resources, support and assistance to ensure that the sorts of problems I have referred to can be tackled properly to preserve and conserve the estuary and to improve the estuary environment over the coming years. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party is not in government and has not been in government for some time, and very little action is happening to help improve the local environment. During the 2001 election, the Labor Party promised to spend about \$1 million, I think it was, putting in a bitumen road to the north of the estuary and building some monument to John Boyle O'Reilly. A lot of people in the local community were left scratching their heads and wondering why on earth the government picked that priority, when all that bitumen road will do is exacerbate the problems on the Leschenault peninsula by encouraging far more people into an area that is pretty fragile as it is. To erect a monument like this rather than spending that money actually conserving and protecting the environment of the estuary and the peninsula was really quite mind-boggling. People saw this \$1 million being spent on political edifices when it could have been spent doing something serious about fixing the environmental problems I referred to earlier.

The Labor government eventually said it would spend \$50 000 on something to do with the Leschenault Inlet, but it turned out that it was only talking about the small volume of water in the actual Bunbury central business district area. Of course, \$50 000 would be a drop in the ocean compared with what is needed to resolve the environmental problems and put in place a sensible management plan for the whole Leschenault Inlet and estuary. In 2001 the Labor Party promised to prepare a proper management plan and produce a major report into the matter, but unfortunately that has never actually happened. A number of seminars have been held and a number of local people have helped to initiate some action, but there are still two outstanding problems. Firstly, somebody must take responsibility for doing something about the problem, and, secondly, very significant resources are needed. A lot of money must be allocated to undertaking the remedial action and putting in place conservation measures required to protect this magnificent environmental asset for future generations.

I applaud the Shire of Harvey, which is taking this matter very seriously. It has come to very similar conclusions. I will quote from an article in the *Bunbury Mail* of 27 April, which reports that the Shire of Harvey has called on the state government to appoint a single body responsible for the Leschenault Inlet and the associated waterways. Shire President Peter Monagle, whom I know feels very strongly about this matter, said

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that maintenance and restoration of the waterways was complicated because of the number of stakeholders involved. The article states -

“It’s been a problem for a long time, but probably because there are so many stakeholders, no one is prepared to put up their hand and take responsibility,” Mr Monagle said.

“We’re hoping that if one body is appointed to take control, something may happen.”

Mr Monagle said he saw dredging and addressing drainage to stop nutrient runoff into waterways as particular issues.

Cr Monagle is absolutely spot-on in what he was saying. To demonstrate, a couple of years ago I asked a question of every minister about the responsibilities that they and their departments and agencies had for the management of the Leschenault Estuary. Most of them ducked for cover. The replies made it quite clear that there was no overall cohesive management structure for the estuary. We have seen this at the local level. In the past, for example, if a beacon needed to be fixed in the estuary, the old Department of Marine and Harbours would send someone in to fix it; no questions asked. If a ramp needed improving or a disabled access facility was required, the state government would provide half the money and the local government would provide the other half. However, now the state government’s arms have shrunk and its pockets have deepened, and it is impossible to get anyone to do anything to fix up the infrastructure of the estuary. I take my hat off to the current member for Bunbury who, as the mayor of Bunbury, took a particular interest in helping the local community to have disabled access infrastructure installed at one of the ramps in Pelican Point, which is in my electorate but still in the city of Bunbury. It was a combined effort by me, the then mayor and his officers, and supporters in the local community. That project now, thank goodness, is up and running. I may stand corrected, but I think it has taken us about three and a half years to get to this stage. In environmental matters, it is nearly impossible to get anyone interested in developing a sensible management plan, let alone in putting in the resources to do something about it. I take my hat off to the Shire of Harvey for lending its support to the lobby efforts to get the state government to do something about the problem.

If a Liberal government were in office now, \$12 million would have been allocated, and I would suggest that a very significant proportion of that would be applied to resolving the sorts of problems referred to by the Shire of Harvey and by me earlier in my speech, that the local community has been seeking to have addressed for some years. The bottom line is that it is time for someone to take responsibility. It is a state government responsibility. I will go firmly on the record and say that if and when the coalition wins government in slightly less than four years’ time I will expect that my party would have gone to the election with a definite policy, as we did in the last election, to do something about these problems, by providing sufficient money to develop and implement a comprehensive management plan. I will not accept anything short of that. We owe this to not only people who have lived in the area for decades, or to people like myself and my family who have recently moved into the area, but also future generations, which have every right to expect to enjoy such a magnificent environmental asset, which is a cornerstone of the unique lifestyle in the Leschenault area. I plead with the government to take heed of what the local community and organisations such as the Shire of Harvey are saying, and to take heed of what I am saying here today. I will make it one of my key priorities to pursue a proper outcome over the next couple of years if the government does not act before then.

The second thing I want to raise briefly is also a matter of responsibility. It is the responsibility of the government of the day to ensure full, open and honest accountability for its actions, particularly its management of taxpayers’ money. I remind the government of something that happened in September 2003, and which still has not been resolved. During 2003 I asked a series of questions of every minister on a range of very important matters of financial accountability, and what I will call policy accountability; in other words, the Labor Party going to the election saying that it would do something, but not actually publicising the results of its actions, if any. It was necessary to ask a series of questions to find out whether the government had lived up to its promises. I have a lever arch file full of these questions, on areas such as government advertising expenditure and the use of credit cards in government departments and agencies. A particularly interesting area was the extent to which ministers’ offices and government departments had converted their cars to liquefied petroleum gas, in accordance with a Labor Party promise in 2001. I asked questions about the incidence and use of privately plated vehicles in ministers’ offices and government departments and agencies; and about the incidence of home garaging of vehicles. It might be asked why it matters if a few hundred cars are being used with private plates, but taxpayers have a right to know how many cars have private plates, how many are being home garaged, and what the costs of such policies are. I asked about the costs of conferences and seminars being held both in-house and externally on behalf of government departments and agencies. I even asked about the policies that ministers or their agencies had put in place to assist members of the deaf community. The results, quite frankly, were absolutely amazing; not because of the information I received but because of the amount of

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information I did not receive. I remember that *The West Australian* picked up on this at the time, and ran a fairly extensive article on 8 September 2003, headed "Gallop faces pressure on spending". The article included a table of seven key areas on which the opposition had asked questions, and listed the ministers who had and had not responded on each question. It is quite fascinating, because on all these areas the Premier did not answer one single question. The replies from the Premier were appalling. I have in front of me an example of that. It is a question on notice from Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan to the Premier; Minister for Public Sector Management; Federal Affairs; Science; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, which asked -

Will the Premier provide -

- (a) the full details, including total cost, since 19 February 2001, expended by each agency and statutory body that comes under your ministerial jurisdiction of officers attending conferences or seminars that were not conducted by each respective agency or statutory body;

I then went on to ask about the figures relating to in-house conferences and seminars. Dr G.I. Gallop replied -

The information being sought by the member is not readily available.

So what? If it is not readily available, it can be found. It must be there. The answer continued -

I would advise that information systems used in agencies are designed to address operational and statutory requirements and don't necessarily facilitate the ready provision of information being sought by the member.

So what? It continued -

However, if the member has a particular issue of concern, I would be pleased to consider arranging for the agency to provide information on that specific issue.

The whole point of an opposition is for it to play a watchdog role. We ask these sorts of questions to find out whether there are issues of concern. We do not always ask a question because someone in the community has leaked us information to indicate that there has been a blow-out in spending on the railway or that credit cards are not being used properly or whatever. We ask these questions to ensure that the government is spending taxpayers' money properly, and that that money is not being wasted or spent in an improper manner. The reply we received was that the information was not readily available as the systems do not provide for that information to be easily obtained. We were told that if we had a specific issue of concern, the government would deal with it. The Premier replied in the same way to every single question that was asked of him. That is very interesting, because I recall that when I asked the same questions of the Attorney General and Minister for Health, he answered every single question. I remember that he gave a comprehensive and detailed response on the services provided to members of the deaf community. That begs the question: why could one minister do it but the Premier could not? It is clear from this that the government did everything possible to avoid putting out the information. The Premier was embarrassed into doing something about it. The next day he came into the Parliament and made a statement, which the media reported under the heading "Gallop promises answers". *The West Australian* reported -

PREMIER Geoff Gallop has promised to ensure a raft of unanswered questions from the Opposition in Parliament will be re-examined.

The article stated that the Premier said that the departments would go through the 10 questions to provide answers, and that the government accepted the responsibility of answering parliamentary questions. Members might be interested to know that the Premier gave that assurance on 9 September 2003. To this day we have not received one further response. When we start to ask the same questions again to find out the latest situation, it will be very interesting to see whether the Premier is prepared this time to respond. It will also be interesting to see whether his new ministers, in particular, adopt the Minister for Health's comprehensive approach to providing information and ensuring that the good rules of accountability are abided by, or whether they follow the lead of the Premier or even the Deputy Premier, for that matter, who answered only one and a half questions. I hope that the new ministers will look to the Minister for Health for a lead in this case. I do not often suggest that he is a role model, but in this case he whipped the Premier in terms of accountability on these questions. I do not think that answers were not provided because other ministers were lazy or bone idle, or I hope it was not that. I think it was just that they did not want to provide information, some of which might have been politically sensitive to the government. I put the government on notice: its ministers can expect a range of these questions to shortly come their way. The opposition hopes that they will provide far more comprehensive answers than the answers they provided last time.

Finally, I wish to move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply.

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Amendment to Motion

Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN: I move -

That the following words be added to the Address-in-Reply motion -

but regrets to inform Your Excellency that the government's one vote, one value legislation will decimate the level of country representation in the Parliament, especially in the south west and goldfields region of Western Australia which have been abandoned by the Labor Party.

In moving that amendment I make one very simple point; that is, we recently dealt with this comprehensive legislation in the Parliament. However, not every member was given the opportunity to express his or her point of view. One member in particular who represents the region to which I have just referred, the member for Collie-Wellington, was not able to participate in the vote on that matter, probably for personal reasons. He has made it quite clear publicly that he does not support the government's endeavours to reduce country representation. We want to provide the opportunity for all members, including that member, to go on the record today to express their opposition to what the government is doing. The south west is the country region that would be most affected by the government's electoral change legislation. Representation of that region in both the upper and lower houses would be affected. The voice of that region in this Parliament would be dramatically reduced. It is the fastest growing region in this state. I believe that the area in the south west to which I have just alluded is still the fifth-fastest growing region in the whole of Australia. That area has pressing infrastructure needs. There are enormous problems in areas such as health services and in the need for improved roads, such as the South Western Highway which desperately needs a massive injection of funds to make the road a dual carriageway and to provide for safer motoring and so on. It is beholden on every member of that area to stand up for that community in the strongest possible terms.

I have just one message for the member for Collie-Wellington today; that is, I ask him to speak for his local community and the people he represents. He has a reputation in the south west. The people to whom I have spoken believe that he has the guts to do something like this. As one south west member to another, I ask the member on this occasion, when it comes to the vote, that he join us, represent his community and stand up for the south west people whom he, I and other members on this side of the chamber represent. My colleagues from the south west in the Liberal Party have stood up for their communities. We have opposed what the Labor Party is doing at every opportunity. We are giving the member for Collie-Wellington an opportunity to now join with us and to stand up and fight for his community.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [12.48 pm]: I was going to talk about the one vote, one value issue in my response to the Address-in-Reply, but this amendment gives me a further opportunity to speak. The member opposite is correct in that I have made some comments about one vote, one value. I will stick by those comments. However, if the member had read the article properly, he would know that I support the issue of one vote, one value, but not a piece of legislation that does not do it, in my view, right across the board. That is something I have spoken to ministers and most people about. We cannot bastardise a piece of legislation to suit some people. Either have it or do not. That is still my position. I heard what the member for Leschenault said. I will make that decision once the amendments to the legislation come back from the upper house. I will read those amendments and then make my decision. At this stage we do not know what the finalised draft of the legislation will be. I will leave it at that. When that comes back from the upper house, I will take -

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: In fairness, you do know what are the implications for the south west; it will reduce representation.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: No-one knows at this stage what the implications for the south west will be.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: You do; you just read the bill.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will make another comment on one vote, one value. Local shires have all gone to one vote, one value in recent times. A lot of them - nearly half, I think - have disbanded the zone system or the ward system. These are the same people who took up a collection to try to derail one vote, one value. However, they could see that small communities with four or five people left in them were getting the same voting power as the people on the other side who had 300 or 400, or maybe 3 000 or 4 000, in their communities. Therefore, they made an amendment to make sure that the situation was equal across their whole shire. It is exactly the same thing that they go out and argue against publicly. I am saying to local governments that they cannot have it both ways. Whether they have it or they do not, it is the same position that I am in within this house.

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville) [12.50 pm]: I am fairly disappointed with the comments of the member for Collie-Wellington. I do not know the member for Collie-Wellington personally, but I respect his views.

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However, I must say that they are not what I thought they would be. I had thought, as had others, that the member for Collie-Wellington did not support the concept of one vote, one value in his electorate of Collie-Wellington because he saw the damage that it would do to his electorate and to his ability to represent his electorate. He is saying, in effect, that his opposition to the one vote, one value legislation has nothing to do with the issue of fairness of representation in country regions. He believes that it should apply everywhere. Therefore, in effect, he is saying that he would support the legislation if the special exemption that is being pretended to be given by the government to the Mining and Pastoral Region - I am sure the legislation will come back to us in the near future without that provision still intact - were removed. That is the bit that he does not support, and if it were one vote, one value in all those country regions, he would be happy with that. That means that when the legislation comes back from the other place with those provisions removed, as I suspect it will, he will be quite happy to support it. I believe that principle is fundamentally wrong, and our assessment of the views of the member for Collie-Wellington that he was basically against such a principle is also wrong. It shows that he will support the government in surrendering the value of his representation in his electorate of Collie-Wellington.

The other day we were looking at what that will do in the south west, given that so many seats will be removed from that south west region. One would expect, because of the population base, that there will be a seat in Mandurah, there will probably be a seat in Bunbury, a seat in Busselton and a seat in Albany. That leaves three seats to cover the rest of the south west region, which is represented at the moment by me, as the member for Dawesville, and the members for Murray, Warren-Blackwood, Capel, Stirling and Collie-Wellington. All of that huge area of the south west of Western Australia will have only three members representing it. The member for Collie-Wellington's electorate will become enormous. It will be difficult to cover that whole south west region. The member for Collie-Wellington may have strong support in the area of Collie. However, the logistics of that huge area that he will represent and the current voting trends in the rest of that area mean that inevitably, despite the member's personal popularity in Collie, he will vote himself out of a seat. That might not bother the member. I am sure that if he is a person of principle, which I am certain he is, he will not mind voting for a point of principle. However, the fact is that in supporting that principle, a person who holds the seat of Collie-Wellington will not have to look after only the area of Collie-Wellington that the current member represents; that person will have to represent an enormous area. How on earth will that member, who will represent an area that will be five or six times the area that the member for Collie-Wellington currently represents, be able to properly service his electorate? How will that member be able to get out and look after his constituents? We have already heard the member for Warren-Blackwood say that it takes him and his wife two to three years to visit all the schools in his electorate. How will the member for Collie-Wellington be able to visit all the schools in an enormously expanded new electorate? People will have to drive for hours to see their member, not the short distance they must drive now. The member for Collie-Wellington is not giving value to the people in his electorate by supporting this one vote, one value legislation. He will take away from them the value of the representation that he currently gives them, because, if this one vote, one value legislation is passed, there is absolutely no way on earth that someone working in his position will be able to service them in the same way that he is able to service them now. I am sure the member will realise that once that area is so big, his replacement will have his work absolutely cut out for him.

It bothered me when I read in the newspaper that the Minister for Electoral Affairs has done a deal with the Greens (WA) and with the Independent, and that he and the Greens are confident that the legislation will get through the other place as a result of the deal that has been done. I suspect that deal was done a long time ago, and I suspect -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: I have the names of all five Libs he's done the deal with as well.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I would like to hear them, member for Peel. I have always been impressed -

Mr N.R. Marlborough: It is interesting to watch your position. You have gone from being a city member to a country member, just. It is interesting to watch your position.

Dr K.D. HAMES: My position is that I am strongly opposed to this legislation.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: You're a bit of a political chameleon, aren't you?

Dr K.D. HAMES: No. If there is a member in either house who has had a good opportunity to understand the issues of city versus country members, it would have to be me. While I am not serving in a strictly country seat, I certainly come from a background that has been strongly rural. Therefore, I understand the issues of country representation.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: Have you given up medicine?

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes.

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Mr N.R. Marlborough: Have you? Good. I don't want you diagnosing me with that thought process.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I used to love sitting on the other side and watching the member for Peel's presentations. I always imagined him in a theatre in London. Not only does he have the correct physique for making presentations in a theatre in London, but also he has such a manner that I would pay money to see his presentations in a theatre. I am looking forward to the member standing and talking about this legislation. I recall that the member was always very good at providing names. He was always able to name people. I hope that he will stand at a later stage and name the five members he is talking about, because I for one would be very interested in hearing those names.

Mr P.D. Omodei: That's if they exist.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes. The reason I have thrown out that challenge is that I believe they do not exist. I believe that this is a construction of the government to try to make it look as though there is some dissension on our part. If I am incorrect, I would be very pleased to hear who those persons are. I cannot see why the minister will not make public now the deal that has been done. Now is his opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, he is not in the chamber. However, now is the opportunity for him to tell us what that deal is. If there is nothing wrong with the deal, and if it is all above board and beyond reproach, why not make it public? What do the Greens have to hide? Are they saying no, they do not want it made public? It will be made public soon enough. As soon as they debate it and start going through the issues, everybody will find out. Therefore, why not let the public know now? The public has an interest in this. This Assembly chamber certainly has an interest in this deal that has been done. I presume it relates to protection of the Mining and Pastoral Region. We know that the Greens have said that they will not support legislation that protects the Mining and Pastoral Region, and it sounds as though the member for Collie-Wellington does not want to protect the Mining and Pastoral Region either. If that is the case, so be it, but tell us what will be decided by those members. We made the point during the debate before that we thought it was all a sham. We thought that that promise by the Premier just prior to the election was just typical government election-speak and that the Premier was making a promise that he had no intention of keeping. It is similar to what we have heard about the imminent closure of Royal Perth Hospital as a tertiary hospital. It was just something to shut up consideration of the issue by the electorate to make sure that the electorate did not know what was going on and so that it would think it was something other than what it was. The opposition did not believe the Premier when he said that he would protect the Mining and Pastoral Region. We think that will be proved very shortly when the legislation is returned to this place and the government says, "Woe is me; we tried to protect that region, but the Greens wouldn't let us so we had to come up with a compromise deal". The opposition would like to know what that deal is, and the minister should make it public immediately.

This amendment will have some bearing on the member for Collie-Wellington's electorate and it will give him an opportunity to speak about the One Vote One Value Bill. The member for Collie-Wellington spoke previously but, sadly, his remarks did not reflect the views of the majority of country people, who do not want their representation in this place reduced. Nor did his views reflect the views of city people, who have never at any stage said they wanted increased representation in this house. Some members of Parliament have said that.

Mr N.R. Marlborough interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: As I have said before, I have never heard anyone from the member for Peel's electorate asking for another member for Peel. No-one has said, "We love the member for Peel so much that we want another one; please split him in two and give us two members for Peel!"

Mr N.R. Marlborough: No-one has come forward and said to you they were very concerned about how this dream deal will affect Kalgoorlie-Boulder and those seats in the mining industry. Give me a list of names of people from Mandurah who have approached you.

Dr K.D. HAMES: No-one has approached me about the deal in Kalgoorlie.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: Of course they haven't.

Dr K.D. HAMES: However, many people have complained to me about the one vote, one value legislation.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: They have said to you, "Who the hell are you? We used to deal with that tennis player". They've said much the same to me when they said, "You are the member for Peel aren't you; don't you represent Mandurah?"

Dr K.D. HAMES: If they listened to the member for Peel they would think that two members for Peel would be a circus, so let us have a circus!

An opposition member: Some people say that there are two of him already!

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Dr K.D. HAMES: That was a bit unfair. Someone from our side of the house, who shall remain nameless, said there was already two members for Peel. That was an inappropriate comment, but I am sure the member for Peel is working on it. The other reason we are very happy to support this amendment is due to the use of the guillotine by the government during debate on the one vote, one value legislation, when many members wanted to have their say on issues that deeply affected their electorates. They wanted to make the point that they did not have that opportunity and to explain how seriously this legislation will affect them. I hope all those members will take this opportunity to tell the government that this is very bad legislation and the government should not proceed with it.

DR S.C. THOMAS (Capel) [1.03 pm]: It might interest people to know that I was next on the list to speak during the third reading debate on the One Vote One Value Bill; therefore, I was the first person to miss out on that opportunity due to the guillotine.

Mr N.R. Marlborough: You will not be repetitive then.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: The advantage of my speaking during the third reading debate was that my speech would have been much shorter.

One thing I was going to say during the third reading debate was that I was hoping to hear some positive comments about the one vote, one value legislation. I racked my brains for some time to come up with something positive about the legislation.

Mr N.R. Marlborough interjected.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: I cannot hear the member for Peel. The situation is the same as at the meeting this morning; it is as though he is not really there. The one really good thing about the one vote, one value legislation is that if members opposite agree with the principle of one vote, one value, they will agree very much with the federal government's principle. This issue is about principles. The federal government does not consider that it should look after the interests of one particular area such as Western Australia; it believes it should govern for the entire nation. If members opposite believe that if members are elected on the numerical basis of one vote, one value and, therefore, good government will prevail and the community will be looked after, the real positive about this legislation being passed by the upper house is, surely, that I will not have to listen to the Premier and Treasurer bagging the federal government for not providing adequate resources to Western Australia. Surely it will mean the end of those diatribes about tax reform and federalism.

Mr A.D. McRae: Why do you say that?

Dr S.C. THOMAS: It will illustrate that the state government believes in the principle of the numerical values of voting. If that is the case, surely it will agree with the federal government that Western Australia - if we are calling things the rump - being the rump of Australia as it were, should not complain about needing adequate services, because most importantly - according to the state government - it has appropriate representation. It has 10 per cent of the population and 10 per cent of the seats in Parliament. Surely it will mean that we will not have to listen to the Treasurer complaining that we are \$1 billion or \$2 billion worse off in light of the money that goes out of the state compared with what comes back in. Based on the principle of one vote, one value, no doubt the Treasurer and the Premier will agree that, in the pursuit of governing all of Australia, if our state has resources but not the population, naturally those resources should be spread around the whole country. Surely that will mean the end of complaints by the Premier and the Treasurer. That would be a great positive because I had thought I would have to sit through four years of the state government's bagging the federal government's representation and its delivery of services to Western Australia.

Mr A.D. McRae: Only two and a half now!

Dr S.C. THOMAS: Only two and a half years, assuming we go full term.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Don't you support John Howard on this issue?

Dr S.C. THOMAS: I voted against one vote, one value.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Don't you support John Howard?

Dr S.C. THOMAS: I agree with the Premier's view that Western Australia could do better with federal representation and with the amount of resources it develops compared with what comes back into Western Australia. I am happy to say that on record and acknowledge that many government members say exactly the same thing. I am saying that government members have no grounds on which to complain because, based on the philosophical debate about whether the government itself is about representation or the delivery of services, the government has decided that it is about the numbers and not about delivery of services. It should therefore eat its humble pie and accept that that is the result of a one vote, one value system. Members in the other place will

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argue that the upper house, as a house of review, provides protection. That works wonderfully well in the Senate, does it not?

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Because Liberal senators have sold us out. They are refusing to cross the floor and vote for Western Australia.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: Thank you. That is exactly the same situation in which Labor Party representatives of regional areas have sold out their electorates - by refusing to cross the floor. Thank you; that is a very good, accurate representation. If the Western Australian senators from the Liberal Party should cross the floor, so should Labor Party members of this Parliament.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: Should the Liberal senators cross the floor?

Dr S.C. THOMAS: Absolutely; they should cross the floor if legislation is introduced into federal Parliament that might disadvantage Western Australia. The difference is that the Liberal Party gives its members the freedom to cross the floor and some members have done so.

Mr J.J.M. Bowler: How many have ever done it?

Dr S.C. THOMAS: I have absolutely no idea off the top of my head.

Ms J.A. Radisich: The present Leader of the Opposition did it.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: Thank you; it certainly has happened in the Liberal Party.

The silver lining attached to the one vote, one value legislation is that, by agreeing to this philosophical proposal, we will not have to listen to this debate any further. That will be the end of complaints about federal-state relations. If Western Australia is missing out - I use the example of the development of resources, which is very close to my heart, and particularly the development of natural gas resources in the north west - it is because those natural gas processing units remain offshore. Therefore, royalties generated by those resources will be paid to the federal government. A large amount of money will not be paid into the state coffers. It behoves all members of Parliament in the federal Liberal Party from this state to promote and protect resources and developments in Western Australia. I hope they will do so. In the same vein, I had hoped that in protecting the resources and development of Western Australia outside the Perth metropolitan area, members of the Labor Party in this state would do the same thing and cross the floor. That obviously has not happened.

I acknowledge the member for Collie-Wellington. Sometimes it is brave to stand up and oppose, even only to some degree, one's party. I thank him for that action. It was wise electorally for him to be seen as the protector and defender of regional areas. I agree that the member for Collie-Wellington will have the hardest job of all Labor Party members under the proposed legislation. In the same way, I will have an extremely difficult job. The seat of Collie-Wellington will change dramatically; in fact, that seat and my seat will become one seat, potentially incorporating Leschenault as well. The other seats the Labor Party holds in regional areas are based on major regional centres at Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton. Therefore, all these seats will not expand far in geographic terms as they will cover surrounding populated areas. The member for Albany is not in the chamber at the moment, but I accept his argument: in terms of geography, his seat will not expand a great deal under the one vote, one value legislation, and nor will Bunbury. The seat of Collie-Wellington will alter dramatically. It was very wise politically for the member for Collie-Wellington to be seen, at least in the Press, to be at odds with the Labor Party's position on this issue. Unfortunately, this legislation is about politics and political advantage. In real life and in real terms, I do not think anyone particularly cares about this matter. The arguments on both sides of the house, sadly, are largely academic, except for those with a vested interest and for members on this side of the house representing regional areas. It is about political advantage. We can talk about whether the change is necessary and whether people think that the value of their vote - that is, the percentage their vote represents within a seat - makes a difference. If it did make a difference, we would have a history of people moving out of a seat like Wanneroo, with its massive population. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is 30 000-something voters, is it not?

Ms J.A. Radisich: It's 48 000.

DR S.C. THOMAS: I thank the member. It is a huge number. If it were an issue, we would have read in the newspaper about people moving from Wanneroo to the seat of Murchison-Eyre, which contains about 12 000 voters. If that were the case, surely somebody would have moved so that person's vote would have three times the value. If that were an important matter, somebody would have made that move. I have heard of no-one doing so. I do not think I will hear about it. Ultimately, this is a philosophical, not a practical, argument. Unfortunately, the philosophy will win the day. The government's philosophy of numbers rather than the delivery of services will win the day.

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Like the member for Dawesville, I wait with bated breath to find out the nature of the agreement between the Greens (WA) and the Labor Party. I want to see what the 30 pieces of silver will be. It could be argued that the Greens support for the legislation is a rather petulant act given that the Greens were decimated at the recent election as its representation will drop from five to two members. Perhaps this reduced representation was to some degree a result of Greens support for one vote, one value. Perhaps that is an oversimplification. Perhaps people were tired, as was reported in newspapers, of the tail wagging the dog, rather than vice versa. This agreement will be the parting gift of those upper house members for the Greens (WA). Amusingly enough, those members ostensibly represent rural and regional Western Australia, with an upper house member for the South West, one for Mining and Pastoral and one for the Agricultural Region. Three of the four Greens (WA) members of Parliament who will be thrown out following the recent election represented rural and regional Western Australia, yet, as a parting gift to rural and regional Western Australia, they will take away a massive part of the representation from those areas. In particular, I place on record that I find it incomprehensible that the parting gift of an otherwise very good and responsible Greens upper house member for the South West Region was to leave Parliament the legacy of a massive reduction in representation in the south west. As I said during debate on the One Vote One Value Bill, the south west is the rump of the rump - it will be the ultimate loser in the process. At a minimum, the South West Region will lose four lower house seats and two upper house seats to the metropolitan region. No other region will suffer the same sort of ignominy that the South West Region will suffer. It is interesting that the Minister for Electoral Affairs in proposing this legislation considered that even Albany might move into the Agricultural Region and perhaps take the seat of Stirling with it. I am not expecting that to make a major difference to the seat of Albany. I do not imagine that the member for Albany would have a great objection whether he is linked to the South West or Agricultural Regions. Would that be a fair comment?

Mr P.B. Watson: I would just like to represent my constituents the best I possibly can.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: The member will not mind if he is part of the Agricultural Region. There is no hidden agenda to my question. I do not imagine it would make a difference.

Mr P.B. Watson: With the one vote, one value legislation, I will pick up the City of Albany boundaries. Most people in those areas come to see me now anyway.

DR S.C. THOMAS: I accept that. The member was not in the house earlier when I said he was not the great Labor Party victim in this process. Unfortunately, the member for Collie-Wellington will have the most difficult job as a result of this change. The member for Albany's job will not change a lot if the seat of Albany were to move out to the Agricultural Region. It may well do so. It is a philosophical debate. The government is attempting to prop up what would appear to be a devastated Agricultural Region with its lower house representatives going from seven to four, losing three members, and retaining its upper house seats, even though it has at least a 50 per cent greater population than the Mining and Pastoral Region, which will have five members. It will not look very good. There are some mathematicians in the upper house who will probably enable the legislation to pass, which I find very odd. It looks very bad to have five members of Parliament for 65 000 voter and four members of Parliament for 85 000 voters. Rather than make it look bad, the government will push the seats of Albany and Stirling across to the Agricultural Region. It will not change numbers in terms of representation, but it will not look as bad when it is attempted to be sold. It will not look as difficult or appear to be as badly sorted as is the case. About 1.4 extra seats will move from the South West Region, which will potentially reduce representation to five seats in the South West Region. We will have the incongruous formula that states that 65 000 voters in the Mining and Pastoral Region will vote for five seats and 160 000 voters across the South West will vote in six seats, if the number reaches six seats. It is an interesting philosophical debate, is it not? The government's argument is based on numbers, not the delivery of services. That is the argument today. It is probably lucky for the government that it is not about the delivery of services because, in fact, in many areas, particularly in rural and regional Western Australia, the government would probably be seen as a complete failure. It is based on numbers. If the entire argument is based on numbers - unfortunately I agree with the member for Collie-Wellington - this particular model certainly does not add up. I thank the member for Collie-Wellington for standing and saying so in public. I wish that all members on the other side of the house had the same forthrightness and honesty about this issue. I am glad that I had the ability to say that we should not be listening to any more diatribe about federal-state relationships. My planned discussion was much shorter during the third reading, because I had only five minutes' worth of discussion at that stage. It has dragged out longer today; I apologise for that. I am glad I had a chance to say that, because I hope, perhaps forlornly, that that will be the end of those debates. Obviously we believe in that philosophy. Irrespective of where people live, government is about the numbers, not about the delivery of services; nor is it about the amount of money coming back into a community. We could ask: how much money leaves the Pilbara? Larry Graham, the previous member for Pilbara, must have asked that a number of times in this house during his tenure. How much money is generated by the Pilbara and how much money goes back into that community? However, that is not an issue

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because one vote, one value will see an end to that. We believe with all our hearts and minds that one vote, one value is not about how much money comes and goes, and neither is it about the delivery of services. Rather, it is about the number of people who are put on a card. It is about the number of voters in an electorate. I am truly glad that there is a silver lining to this debate. Please let that be the end of these discussions.

MR A.D. McRAE (Riverton) [1.24 pm]: This amendment cannot be agreed to. It is misleading of the opposition to attempt to resurrect the one vote, one value discussion during the Address-in-Reply debate. It fails to acknowledge the processes which have been under way in this chamber and which are currently under way in the other place, where the nature of the debate about one vote, one value and the legislative changes necessary to give effect to that concept are in place.

The opposition is dragging out the Address-in-Reply debate to provide it with a series of platforms from which to raise issues that it feels are necessary to raise as an opposition. Certainly, that is its job. However, we would also expect an opposition to provide some substance to the amendments it moves to the Address-in-Reply debate and, indeed, to challenge the government's future plans. This amendment does not challenge the address given by the Governor when Parliament was opened, and neither does it set in train a platform for debate about the programs and services that people in Western Australia want the government of this state to deliver. Indeed, it is a last gasp and quite a desperate political stunt to continue to foment disquiet about the essential element of a democratic modern state; that is, no matter where people live and no matter who they are or what their station is in life, their vote should equal that of anybody else's in this state. That principle was not reinvented or distorted by any of the arguments advanced by the opposition when the substantive debate on the one vote, one value legislation, which has passed through this chamber, was under way. Nothing said by opposition members today will change that fundamental principle. All we see is a lot of rioting and a lot of scaremongering. Indeed, it is a little bit like Hanrahan and a little bit like Chicken Little in that we will all be "rooned" or the sky will fall in when there is true democracy in Western Australia. That has not happened in any other state in Australia or in any other place in the world where true universal franchise has been introduced.

What do we see when we look back through the political ancestry of the members who have spoken today? We see the Whigs and the Tories; those who would have denied any person without property the right to vote. The same people to whom opposition members look as their antecedents denied women the right to vote. The same people have in their political historical baggage a denial of the right of Aboriginal people to vote. The opposition can look back to its ancestry and its political heritage and see the same people who said that any person of a non-Anglo/Celtic background should not come into this country. They are still writhing around in the same gutter and denying the same fundamental principle that every citizen of this state has the same political power as every other person in the state. It does not matter where people live or what their background or income is - they should have equal rights and political power. That is an inalienable right and a fundamental principle of a modern democracy. If any skerrick of the opposition's argument today, or in the substantive debate when the one vote, one value legislation was before this chamber some weeks ago, had any weight, there would be some truth in the notion that the country regions of Western Australia are so overwhelmingly advantaged by the distortion in voting that somehow they will lose something if one vote, one value is introduced. When we talk about the provision of services we do not hear the opposition argue that by virtue of having over-representation in this Parliament country people have an advantage. In fact, they argue the exact opposite. Where is the connectivity in the opposition's logic? There is no logic, because there is no substance to its argument. For over 100 years there has been a distortion in vote weighting in this state which, as the opposition has argued, has produced gross disadvantages to the people of regional Western Australia. Where is the logic in the opposition's argument? There is none. The opposition's argument has absolutely no substance. It is absolutely unable to produce one shred of historical evidence or fact to support its argument. All the opposition can argue is the same inheritance of disadvantage and privilege that its lot has been perpetuating for more than 100 years. Time is up! It is time for universal equal political power for every citizen in this state to be realised. Now is the time when people will see that disproportionate vote weighting and disproportionate voting power do not deliver services, a sense of wellbeing or an outcome in the regions. It has not delivered anything. In fact, the opposition pretends that the regions have relied on it. If there is any truth to the opposition's argument, it has failed the people miserably. It cannot stand anywhere - not in this chamber or in any community - and successfully argue that disproportionate vote weighting has produced a benefit. There is no evidence - none whatsoever. That is the sham and the shambles of the opposition's argument. It has no substance.

Mr P.B. Watson: Before I became the member for Albany, four members of Parliament were situated in Albany. We got nothing. Now there is one, and look at the advancement in Albany over the past four years.

Mr A.D. McRAE: That is right. There has been real change because there has been decent representation and a good government that talks about investment in the future. We see the same change not only in the member for

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Albany's fair seat, but also in Geraldton and in Bunbury before the people of that electorate were misguided enough to unfortunately bring a new member in and do away with the fantastic former local member. Believe it or not, the same thing is seen in the goldfields.

I am waiting to see - I was going to say with bated breath, but the breath is now released - the speed with which the Leader of the Opposition gets on the Goldfields Express and travels to possibly Swanbourne, Cottesloe or Nedlands. If the member for Nedlands were here I am sure she would be interested in a discussion on where the Leader of the Opposition will find a bolthole.

Mr P.B. Watson: He is the gelding from the goldfields.

Mr A.D. McRAE: That is right, he was the colt from Kalgoorlie and now he is the gelding from the goldfields. He will be on the first train into town and members will watch the turn in his demeanour as the flavour of his argument is wiped away.

Would members opposite commit today to repeal one vote, one value and re-establish a disproportionate vote-weighting system, once that legislation is in place?

Mr M.W. Trenorden: Yes.

Mr A.D. McRAE: The Leader of the National Party has put up his hand. At least he has had the honesty to say he would, if he is given the opportunity. Will any members of the Liberal Party put up their hands?

Mr G. Snook: Absolutely.

Several members interjected.

Mr A.D. McRAE: There are one, two and three, and there we have it.

What we have seen is a guaranteed rabble if, at any time in the future, members opposite get a chance on the government benches. It would result in a total disassembling of a government party.

This amendment suggests that giving people equal political and democratic rights in Western Australia in the twenty-first century will somehow decimate country representation. It might do that, because many members opposite will not be here, and might in some way abandon the people of Western Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth and I will tell members why. Every time the member for Warren-Blackwood stands up he does so with a total vote in his electorate less than what I got as a single candidate. He stands up in this place and fewer people voted in his electorate, in total, than voted for one candidate in the seat of Riverton. What does that mean about the political weight he carries? What it means is that, for the last 110 years, every time a country member has stood up, apart from their argument about the importance of the regions they represent - which I fully acknowledge -

Mr G. Snook: You do not live in the bush.

Mr A.D. McRAE: Because the member for Moore is new to this place, I will give him a little tip. Sometimes members need to know a bit of background about people before they start firing bullets.

I am 48 years of age this month and have spent more than half my life in country and regional Australia. I am a person of the bush. I come from Tumut in New South Wales, Snowy Mountains country.

Mr P.D. Omodei: What did you do?

Mr A.D. McRAE: I have been an electrician and a farm worker and have held down a range of jobs in and around country Australia.

Members opposite who suggest that members on this side who represent city electorates have no knowledge of country and regional Australia's interests, quite frankly, do not know what they are talking about. They should pause to question before they launch into this sort of dud attack.

For more than 100 years, and as the vote-weighting malapportionment has grown in favour of the country, the voice of the members who stand and represent a smaller number of people in this place has been devalued.

Let me mark this as my value in one vote, one value. After the next election, every member who stands in this place representing his or her electorate on the basis of one vote, one value will have equal weight and his or her argument will have equal authority. No member will be dismissed simply because he or she comes from a backblock in the country. That will no longer be an argument for ignoring the voice of that member. One vote, one value will add to the weight of the voice of country people.

This amendment is a farce and I oppose it.

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MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [1.35 pm]: I will read the amendment to the Address-in-Reply for the benefit of those people who have just come into the public gallery. It reads -

but regrets to inform Your Excellency that the government's one vote, one value legislation will decimate the level of country representation in the Parliament, especially in the south west and goldfields region of Western Australia which have been abandoned by the Labor Party.

The opposition has many reasons for bringing this amendment to the Parliament. It will allow the members of Parliament who took part in the one vote, one value legislation debate to make a contribution because they were guillotined during the third reading. Many of those members were new members of Parliament and had an important point to make on behalf of their constituents. I understand that democracy is about giving people a fair say in the affairs of running this state - that is, everybody in the state, not just the members of Parliament.

As the debate on the legislation unfolded, it came to light that the Labor Party - the government - was well aware of the implications of the one vote, one value system well before the election. The government knew it would create two new members of Parliament - two new legislative councillors. Were the people of Western Australia advised of that fact? No, they were not. Would they have supported the creation of two new members of Parliament? Has the community been clamouring for two new members of Parliament at a cost of \$1 million?

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: Not much.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: With the cost of the salaries, vehicles, superannuation and electorate accommodation, there would be no change out of \$1 million.

Was the public of Western Australia advised that nine members of Parliament would be transferred out of regional Western Australia into the metropolitan area? No, it was not. The additional two new members will mean there will be 11 new city members of Parliament.

It was important that members of the opposition backbench be given the opportunity in the third reading debate to have their say on the information revealed during the debate, given that those things had come to light during the various stages of the debate on the one vote, one value legislation. The opposition found during that debate that the Labor Party was going to keep vote weighting in the Mining and Pastoral Region. It has also been revealed in the past few days that the Greens (WA), which is a support party for the Labor Party - it is the left of the Labor Party and it has formed an informal coalition with the Labor Party - will have its future protected under this legislation. There will be vote weighting in the Legislative Council and in the Mining and Pastoral Region. However, there will be a major shift, as the member for Capel said, of six seats that are held mainly by members of the Liberal and National Parties. How many seats would the Labor Party have won in the south west of Western Australia if that had been made clear prior to the election? I put it to members that it would have been none.

I have outlined some of the reasons that Her Majesty's opposition has moved this amendment to the Address-in-Reply. It will allow those members who were prevented by the guillotine from making a contribution to the third reading debate to have their say. Why was the guillotine implemented so early that week? What was the government worried about? It happened on Wednesday afternoon, not on Thursday. Was the government worried about a bomb threat? Do members recall the bomb threat that occurred during the debate on the industrial relations legislation? We all had to vacate the Parliament. Was the government worried that something might happen to prevent the passage of the legislation on the Thursday, which would have meant that the Legislative Council would have had one week fewer to debate the legislation? Only yesterday information came to light that the Greens (WA) were prepared to join with the Labor Party to use the guillotine in the upper house. What was the real reason behind that? It was purely political favour and political strength. We know how the legislation has been drafted. Again, it came to light during the consideration in detail stage, when the bill was examined clause by clause and line by line, that the new boundaries would be realigned after four years. In fact, it is all about the naked ambition of the government to stay in power. It is not about fair or equal representation for people in Western Australia. It is just about political imperative. Why do members opposite not just admit that? Why did the member for Collie-Wellington, who I think is not a bad bloke, get up in this Parliament and speak for two minutes to defend his constituency? What the Labor Party has done to that member is an absolute disgrace. Members opposite should be ashamed of themselves for putting him in that position. The member for Collie-Wellington knows that he has been shafted by the Labor Party. I do not know what he was promised. Maybe he was promised a position in the upper house. Time will tell, and time will be the ultimate judge in this matter.

The opposition has moved this amendment to the Address-in-Reply to allow its members to have their say. Coincidentally, it will allow the member for Collie-Wellington to have his say. It will also allow the members of

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Country Labor to have their say. I recall listening to the member for Albany yesterday when he spoke about the wonderful things that Country Labor had done for the people in regional Western Australia. I have heard about Country Labor about three times in the two years since it was formed. What is it doing? It is part and parcel of and party to a bid by this government to strangle the voice of country people in regional Western Australia. During the second reading contributions of those members, I mentioned the issue of fair representation. Members will recall that when the Labor Party attempted to put this legislation through the Parliament in 2001, it was rejected by the Parliament. It was taken first to the Supreme Court and then to the High Court by the Labor Party. The High Court ruled that there should be fair representation. That is what representation in Australia should be about. As we all know, the vast majority of people in Western Australia live in the city. The government and the member for Collie-Wellington have said in this place that one vote, one value exists in local government. Everybody in this house knows that that is not true. If we took that to its logical conclusion and applied one vote, one value to local government in Western Australia, how many local governments would we have in regional Western Australia? Given that currently there are 112 regional local governments in Western Australia, out of a total of 144, what would it mean if we were to apply one vote, one value? It would mean that there would be hardly any local governments in regional Western Australia.

Mr M.P. Whitely: That is an absurd argument.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: It is an absurd argument? The member for Bassendean did not have the courage to stand for his previous seat in the hills because he thought he might lose.

Mr M.P. Whitely: The seat was abolished at the last election.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Or the seat that took its place.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You fool.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think that was very parliamentary. The member for Bassendean just walked away from the seat in the hills.

Mr M.P. Whitely: What seat did I walk away from?

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Where was the member previously - Serpentine-Jarrahdale? What is it now?

Mr M.P. Whitely: It is not there; it was abolished.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Has it disappeared off the face of the earth? Those people still exist.

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: The member opposite, who protests a little too much, walked away from the people he represented.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You fool.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Bassendean!

Mr P.D. OMODEI: The member has again tried to use language that will upset me. I am very hard to upset nowadays.

The important point is that people in Western Australia should have fair representation. This motion refers to the goldfields region of Western Australia and country Western Australia. We know that nine fewer members of Parliament will represent regional Western Australia. If the member for Riverton's argument is correct that, with vote weighting of three to one, regional Western Australia does not get enough services and that that is a reflection on its sitting members, how will one vote, one value increase the chances of people in country areas getting better services? There will be six fewer members in the south west, yet that area will receive more services! That is the kind of logic that the Labor Party is trying to pitch to the Parliament. Members opposite were very lucky; they got away with it because the people of Western Australia did not twig to what was going on prior to the election. If the current government wins an extra eight seats at the next election, rather than the four seats it currently needs to retain government, it also will have built into the legislation another little insurance scheme; that is, that if things are a little tight after the next election, the boundaries can be redrawn again to consolidate its position. It is a naked attempt by the Labor Party to buy two terms of government. Do members recall the so-called Joh Bjelke-Petersen gerrymander? What happened in the end? The wheel turned and that has now changed significantly.

What are we seeing here? We are seeing treachery by the Labor Party. It is hand in hand with its mates from the Greens. The member for Capel very capably and adeptly explained the situation with the number of Greens members who lost their seats at the last election. The legislation will just restore those Labor and Greens members to the Legislative Council. It will allow vote weighting for the Mining and Pastoral Region in the

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Legislative Council, but the Labor Party has wiped its hands of the rest of Western Australia and has said to the people in rural and regional Western Australia, "See you later." It is a shame that there are not more people in the public gallery to understand what the position will be. I can pick any seat I like, and in particular Ballajura or Bassendean. They have one local government and maybe a couple of schools.

Mr M.P. Whitely: You have no idea.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: How many does the member have in his electorate?

Mr M.P. Whitely: There are three local governments in Bassendean, as opposed to Kalgoorlie, which has one.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Keep going. How many schools?

Mr M.P. Whitely: I do not know the exact number.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: He does not know how many schools are in his own electorate!

Mr M.P. Whitely: I have not counted them on my hands.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: Ask me.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: How many schools are there in the seat of Ballajura?

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: Fourteen.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: There are 14 schools. The three new seats in the hinterland of the south west will have up to 40 schools and possibly a dozen local governments. Is that equal representation? Will the people of that area get equal access to their members? The answer is no.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: How many pupils are at your biggest school?

Mr P.D. OMODEI: There are 1 000.

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: The biggest school in your electorate has 1 000 pupils, but the biggest in mine has 2 200.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: That school is obviously too big; there is no doubt about that. My electorate contains significant high schools, such as Margaret River Senior High School. The issue is not about the number of students in each school; it is about the number of schools in an area, the number of students in an area, the size of an electorate and, importantly, people's ability to get fair access to their member of Parliament. How many days of the year does the member spend travelling?

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: Every day.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: For how many hours of the day?

Mr J.B. D'Orazio: It depends on what I am doing.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: Obviously. The member's seat is probably 20 square kilometres, compared with seats that will cover 25 000 to 35 000 square kilometres. I mentioned this during the second reading debate on this matter, but I will mention it again. If a member is sitting in his car for the equivalent of 50 full days of the year, members can multiply that number by three to convert it to eight-hour working days. It comes to over 100 days. The reason members representing country electorates in Western Australia do not drive during the day is so their constituents can have access to them during the day. We do that extra work at night above and beyond that of a city member. The member for Eyre would know that.

Mr M.P. Whitely: He is the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I apologise to the member for Murchison-Eyre. I would hate to leave Murchison out of his electorate because some very good people come from that part of the state. The member for Murchison-Eyre has access to air charter but would still have to drive a significant number of miles in his car. The member knows that his constituents will not have the same access to him as constituents in a city electorate will have to their member, particularly if those city electorates are reduced by about 3 000 constituents on average. I know that your electorate of Wanneroo, Madam Deputy Speaker, had grown from 22 000 to 44 000 constituents prior to the last redistribution. That is an irrefutable fact. It happens in Wanneroo and probably in other electorates.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Will you take an interjection?

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I am not in the habit of taking interjections from idiots. Electorates with centres like Rockingham, Mandurah and Margaret River that are growing exponentially will be distorted as soon as the number of constituents is set. We have already established during this debate that there is no such thing as one vote, one value. It does not exist in Western Australia for the Senate or the House of Representatives, and it does not exist in other states. Within days or months of constituent numbers being set in each electorate, the

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electorates become out of kilter. This is graphically illustrated in your seat, Madam Deputy Speaker, which is growing so fast. Do not let Labor Party members give us this argument about one vote, one value. They know it is a misnomer. This legislation is about political strength and favour and not about individual members of Parliament. It is about the Labor Party entrenching itself in politics in Western Australia. Why do government members not be honest and admit to the people of Western Australia that they are using their numbers? It does not matter how good a speech the member for Capel made. I thought it was a very good speech. In the end we will lose this argument and debate because there is a greater number of members on the other side than on this side. We can count too. We know we will lose this debate, but that does not stop us from being able to stand in this Parliament to put logical arguments so that the people of Western Australia and the people of our constituencies can read or view what we are saying in this Parliament about their future.

In the end, if the government has its way, metropolitan seats will have fewer constituents and there will be more seats in the metropolitan area than there are in regional Western Australia. Members must ask themselves whether that is fair. Would that give people in regional Western Australia the same access to their member of Parliament as constituents would have in metropolitan Perth? It would be very easy for members on this side of the house to stand for a metropolitan seat. I think that standing for a metropolitan seat would be a breeze. I could run around my electorate in half a day and talk to all my constituents. My electorate would have three or four parents and citizens associations. I would not have to get in a car because I would not need a car. Why city members of Parliament get a car has me beaten. We should be saving the taxpayers some money and making city members walk around their electorates. They could catch a train or a bus. They have all the services that we in regional Western Australia do not have. I would agree to this proposition if regional Western Australia had the same medical, educational and transportation facilities that are available to people in metropolitan Perth. This is a sham and government members should be ashamed of themselves.

MR G. SNOOK (Moore) [1.58 pm]: A couple of weeks ago when we were debating this in the house -

Mr A.D. McRae: Tedious repetition!

Mr G. SNOOK: I beg the member's pardon. The one who speaks of tedious repetition is a little out of order. When this house was debating this matter a couple of weeks ago I drove into Perth along the freeway. A gloomy pall was hanging over the city. People that day could see the fog descending over Perth. That is the sort of feeling country people have. Members can laugh, joke and make all sorts of analyses of the matter, but the fact remains that is how country people feel.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Is that when you were going to your office over the road in Perth?

Mr G. SNOOK: Give it a break! Rural Western Australia does not mean Albany or Geraldton. I have had a long career in local government. I refer to the member for Murchison-Eyre - I emphasise "Murchison" because he obviously does not like being called the member for Eyre, and I do not blame him. The member for Murchison-Eyre should know, as the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, that the principle of one vote, one value applies to local government. I believe that the member for Albany said that all seats were dissolved and there were no wards. That does not mean one vote, one value. One vote, one value can still be applied to local government with wards. It simply means that the wards are rearranged. People who are elected to local government in rural Western Australia live in the country; they do not live in urbanised regional centres such as Geraldton, Albany or Bunbury. When it comes to this chamber, this is where the principle counts. The votes in here get services to the country. It is not about the number of voters in an electorate. The title of the One Vote One Value Bill is a misnomer because it is not about one vote, one value. It is not possible to achieve that with a state the size of Western Australia, which covers nearly one third of the continent.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr G. SNOOK: What about the Senate? I have not heard anyone from the other side saying that we should have equal representation of voters in the Senate. If it were so, we would probably lose five of Western Australia's senators. Is that what government members want? Should that be the case? If so, so be it.

The Minister for Electoral Affairs, by his own admission, said during the debate that he was prepared to compromise the pure principle of one vote, one value, which would mean that the Mining and Pastoral Region would be quarantined. That very admission constitutes a watering down of that principle. That is one indicator of the need for and the benefit of the democratic principle of having some vote weighting in regional Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

Mr G. SNOOK: Do I need to keep repeating myself? Members opposite can have their debate across the floor. I reiterate: the Minister for Electoral Affairs said that he was prepared to compromise the pure principle of one

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vote, one value in order to get part way, I think were his words, towards quarantining the five seats in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Members opposite want evidence. An argument can be put to support what I am saying.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 774.]