

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 16th December, 1903.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock, p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## QUESTION—CROWN BRIEFS.

MR. THOMAS asked the Premier: 1, Whether a return in connection with "Crown Briefs," a motion for which now appears on the Notice Paper, is in course of preparation. 2, If so, on what date the information asked for will be available for members of this House.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Not yet. If the hon. member so desires I shall instruct that the return be prepared at once. 2, As soon after it has been ordered as is possible.

## QUESTION—STATE HOTEL FOR GOOMALLING.

HON. G. THROSSELL asked: Whether, if requested by the residents, the Government will give favourable consideration to the question of the erection of a State-controlled hotel at Goomalling township, where accommodation, owing to the rapid agricultural settlement, is said to be a growing necessity.

The PREMIER replied: I shall be glad to have the matter looked into if so desired, and to meet the needs of the locality referred to as far as practicable.

## QUESTION—RAILWAY STATION, WOKALUP.

MR. HAYWARD asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether it is the intention of the Government to construct a platform at the Wokalup station. 2, If so, when.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, This matter is receiving the consideration of the Commissioner, who will take the earliest opportunity of

paying a personal visit to the locality and thereafter submit recommendations.

## QUESTION—ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

MR. THOMAS (for Mr. Stone) asked the Premier: 1, How many Royal Commissions have been appointed during the last three years. 2, The objects for which they were appointed. 3, The names of members of Parliament and others who served on such Commissions. 4, What remuneration each member of Parliament received for such services. 5, What members of Parliament refused remuneration for their services. 6, Whether members of Parliament are entitled to receive remuneration in such cases.

THE PREMIER replied: The information is being prepared.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by MR. HIGHAM, farther leave of absence for one fortnight granted to Dr. McWilliams, on the ground of urgent private business; and on motion by MR. JACOBY, leave granted to Mr. Hassell, on the ground of indisposition.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: By-laws of Perth, Albany, and Victoria Park municipalities. Correspondence asked for by Mr. Burges. Report of Acclimatisation Committee.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

## AUDIT BILL (No. 2).

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

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

## ELECTORAL BILL.

## COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of 23 amendments made by the Council now considered, in Committee; MR. QUINLAN in the Chair; the PREMIER in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Part III., "Electors," strike out the whole:

THE PREMIER: On the second reading he had pointed out that he proposed to put in Part III. the provisions dealing with the qualifications of electors, with the object of eliminating from the Constitution Act as many as possible of

these changeable features. The course proposed was somewhat similar to that adopted in the Federal Constitution, which provided that until the Federal Parliament otherwise determined, the electoral qualifications should be those existing in the various States. Since that time the Federal Parliament had, in a Franchise Act, settled the qualification of electors, and had passed an Electoral Act also. For years past in this State the qualification of electors was embodied in the Constitution, and that had been the practice in the Eastern States also. The Council disagreed with our proposal that the qualification should be embodied in the Electoral Bill, preferring to have it in the Constitution Bill. In Part III. the Bill provided for qualification of electors of Council, of Assembly, qualification of seamen and pearlers, disqualifications, a clause in relation to aboriginal natives, a clause as to joint owners, and Clauses 20 and 21 which provides for one vote only for each elector, whether for Council or Assembly. On the Notice Paper would be found the clauses which we inserted in Part III. of the Electoral Bill. With the amendments the Council had made in these we should deal when considering the Constitution Bill. The Council took up the position that all questions as to qualification of electors should be embodied in the Constitution Act itself, and not in the Electoral Act. Though he considered that in the interests of the State it would be wiser to take out of the Constitution Bill more or less changeable matters such as this, it was undeniable that in the Eastern States the qualification of electors was embodied in their Constitution Acts. He proposed, therefore, to ask the House to agree to the Council's amendment, subject to certain farther amendments. The Council's amendment sought to strike out Part III., dealing with electors, and for the reasons indicated. He moved

That the amendment be agreed to, subject to the amendment that Clause 14 of the Bill as it left the Assembly should read:—

Sections 15 and 26 of the Constitution Act of 1899 are amended by substituting the words "when registered," for the words "when registered for six months."

It was desirable that the Electoral Bill should as far as possible stand by itself,

and not be dependent on the passage of the Constitution Bill or any other Bill; because the Electoral Bill contained most desirable, one might almost say most essential, provisions. One of the amendments provided in the Bill was that when an applicant for registration was registered he had at once the right to vote within the limited time mentioned; but Section 15 of the Constitution Act provided that he was not entitled to vote until registered for six months. Therefore, if the Electoral Bill were to stand by itself it must contain a clause repealing those words "when registered for six months," making the right to vote depend on registration. By the amendment the Council struck out the whole of the part. He (the Premier) was willing to strike out portion of it, subject to a certain amendment which did not in its truest sense affect the qualification. In every case where the qualification depended on the period or method of qualification it should be in the Electoral Bill. Unless the amendment was passed the Bill itself would depend in its operation upon the passage of other Bills. He wished to make the measure as far as possible self-contained. When the Assembly dealt with Part III. we provided in the schedule for consequential amendments to the Constitution Act. We repealed Sections 16, 17, 26, 27, and 28 of the Constitution Act because those provisions were contained in Part III. of the Bill; but if Part III. was struck out consequential amendments would have to be made in the first line of the schedule: that had been overlooked by the Council. Clause 20 of Part III. provided that "No person may, at the same time, be registered on more than one Council roll or on more than one Assembly roll;" and Clause 21, "No person possessing more than one qualification within the province is thereby entitled to be registered more than once for that province." As to the substance of Clause 20 there was no dispute at all between the two Houses; there was no difference of opinion, because if members turned to the suggested amendments to the Constitution Bill they would find that these clauses were inserted in the Constitution. In a subsequent clause it was provided that "where a person was in more divisions than one, that person could change."

The same principle was carried out in that clause. A difference of opinion did arise in relation to the clause in Part II., which provided "That no person might at the same time be registered on more than one Council roll or on more than one Assembly roll." Members no doubt would observe on looking at the suggested amendments to the Constitution Bill that the Council did not agree to plural voting for the Assembly, but did agree to it so far as the Council provinces were concerned. If we were to accept the provision for the present, and we were to accept a continuation of plural voting so far as the Council was concerned the clause needed modifying, and he proposed that the Assembly should not agree to the amendments of the Council so far as it was proposed that there should be a continuation of plural voting for the Council. Taking up that stand it became desirable, if it were found necessary, to stand by Clauses 20 and 21, and he proposed therefore, in dealing with the first suggestion, to ask members to agree to the first amendment subject to the amendments which he had indicated, the main reason being to enable the Electoral Bill to stand by itself, whatever might be the fate of the other Bills before the consideration of the Parliament.

MR. HASTIE: Was it competent for the Assembly to amend the amendments made by another place?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; it was competent to make any amendment.

THE PREMIER: That point only cropped up when the Council sent back a Bill insisting on its amendments.

MR. PIGOTT: The Council, in recommending that Part III. should be struck out, did so with the idea of placing all matters dealing with the qualifications of voters in the Constitution Bill, in order that those qualifications should not be lightly altered. This House had agreed that as soon as an elector became registered he should have the power of voting, and that we should do away with the present system of forcing the elector to be registered six months before he might use his vote. Clauses 20 and 21 of the Bill as it left us should, together with this amendment proposed in relation to Clause 14, pretty well satisfy the House. The clauses dealt with the question of

plural voting, and it appeared to him that the Premier had made up his mind that this House was determined to insist that we should once and for all do away with plural voting for both Houses. That being so, the Committee might be satisfied to accept the Premier's proposal in this regard, and we could deal with the matter of the qualifications when we came to the Bill to amend the Constitution, in which Bill those qualifications had been placed. Members could reserve to themselves the right to make any remarks they liked on the action taken by the Council regarding those amendments, but for the present he agreed with the Premier that the Committee might safely accept the amendment proposed.

MR. HASTIE: The Premier's motion would have been better if he had said we would agree to accept Clause 14 of the Bill and then amend it, so that all the others might be parts of the Electoral Bill, because Clauses 15, 20, and 21, which the hon. gentleman asked us to insist upon, contained various other matters of interest which should be in the Electoral Bill, such as disqualification of persons of unsound mind and aboriginal natives, and providing for joint occupiers and owners. These clauses were to be put into the Constitution Bill.

THE PREMIER: With the hon. member, he had thought that amendment 16, dealing with seamen, was an electoral clause, but it was not.

MR. HASTIE: Did the hon. gentleman think it wise that it should be in the Constitution Bill?

THE PREMIER: It had been the practice in the past to have the qualifications in the Constitution Bill.

MR. HASTIE: The only difference between a Constitution Bill and an ordinary Bill was that a Constitution Bill required to be passed by an absolute majority in each House, and also required the Royal assent. If these electoral matters were outside a Constitution Bill, we should be able to deal with them much more freely and quickly than would otherwise be the case. The discussion in the Upper House upon the subject showed that members were very anxious to see all these proposed changes made as difficult as possible. That appeared to be the dominant sentiment in the Upper House. He would be only too glad if

this were taken as an opportunity to insist upon everything in this Bill which the Assembly particularly wished. However, if the Premier and the leader of the Opposition believed that we should get along better by deferring a contest on the qualification of electors till we reached the other Bill, he was quite agreeable to accept the amendment of the Premier. We would all agree about the matters the Premier mentioned, and he (Mr. Hastie) hoped they would be passed, but that the more contentious questions would be fought.

MR. TAYLOR: One understood that the clauses in Part III. as it left this Chamber were to be transferred to the Constitution Bill, and then these alterations would be made with some amendments.

THE PREMIER: Yes. The Council objected on principle to having these clauses in the Electoral Bill.

Question passed, the Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

No. 2—Clause 22, line 1, strike out all the words after "kept," and insert "under the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer by the Registrar of each division of a province and of each district":

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be agreed to. This amendment, which was a formal one, dealt with the electoral rolls. We did not provide for the officer under whom these rolls were to be prepared, and that became desirable. The point was raised by the electoral officers as to what was to be the authorisation to a roll. When the roll was sent away to a returning officer, how did we know whether it was a properly authorised roll or not? We did not provide in the Bill who was the person under whose direction the roll was prepared. When that point was brought to the attention of the Government they thought it advisable to move this amendment.

MR. PIGOTT: The words in the amendment were similar to those in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: The point was brought to his notice by the Chief Electoral Officer and it was a question of drafting.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3—Clause 33, strike out the words "the municipal and road board rate books;" also after the word "rolls," in line 2, insert "the lists of municipal and road board electors made out pursuant to Section 39":

THE PREMIER: The Council proposed that, in addition to the data referred to in Clause 33, when making up new rolls we should have reference to the municipal and roads boards rate books. That amendment was not very relevant, because we said in the clause that we should have recourse to various matters and all other available sources. It became material, however, in this respect, that it was proposed a return should be made by the municipalities and roads boards of the persons who were ratepayers in the district, and that return was to be forwarded once a year to the electoral registrar, who should take from that return those persons who appeared to have the qualifications; so to carry that out the Council provided in one of the amendments to the Constitution Bill suggested that amongst other qualifications for the Council should be the rate-paying qualification. That was dealt with in No. 14 of the suggested amendments of the Constitution Bill. They provided by Subclause (6) that any person registered on the electoral list of any municipality or road district in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £25 should be entitled to become an elector. To make that effective it was very necessary to utilise the road boards and municipal electoral lists, and the Council proposed by this amendment that when we were preparing the new rolls we should have recourse to these electoral lists. If members looked at that clause they would find it provided that new rolls might be made up from the existing rolls, the municipal and road boards rate books, the Commonwealth rolls, the latest Census returns, and any other available source. The Council proposed to strike out "the municipal and road board rate books," and insert in lieu thereof "the lists of municipal and road board electors made out pursuant to Section 39." Members would subsequently see the Council proposed a new clause throwing on secretaries of roads boards and municipalities the obligation

of once a year sending a list of their ratepayers. It was not very necessary to refer to this proposed Clause 39 of the amendment of the Constitution, except for the purpose of pointing out why it was put here; because whether this new clause was inserted or not, there was no reason why we should not adopt the Council's suggestion as being simpler than the method at present provided in the Bill, by which, when making the new roll, we were to have copies of the rate book and copies of the electoral lists.

MR. DAGLISH: It was the same thing, because it was provided that no one should be omitted on account of non-payment of rates.

THE PREMIER: There was an obligation cast upon those officers to supply us with a list. The relevancy of the amendment became material when dealing with the proposed new Clause 39.

MR. DAGLISH: There was no alteration so far as Clause 33 was concerned.

THE PREMIER: In one sense there was not; but the obligation of going through the lists was mandatory. The words would not have been put in had it not been for the insertion of new Clause 39. Practically the amendment was consequential on this new clause. He moved,

That the amendment be agreed to.

MR. DAGLISH: If we were to insist on single votes for both Houses of Parliament, the compilation of electors' rolls from municipal rolls and the furnishing of these lists by the officers of the municipalities would simply mean a waste of time on the part of municipal and electoral officers, because many had their names on half a-dozen ratepayers' lists, but were only entitled to vote for one province or one district. To get a perfect roll on the single vote system we should adopt some method of claim forms. We could not get effective rolls by the system now proposed.

THE PREMIER: There was no harm in collecting as much information as possible. The electoral officer, on perusing the lists sent in by the municipal officers, might find names not already registered of persons apparently qualified to vote, and he would put them on the electoral roll. Overlapping could not be avoided. He looked upon the fact of the

Council having recognised ratepayers' rolls as valuable. We ought to get all the information possible, and this was a step in the right direction.

MR. FIGOTT: Was it not at the request of the member for Subiaco that this clause was practically put in the Bill? The hon. member had insisted that we should get assistance from the road boards and municipal rate books.

MR. DAGLISH: The point made was that the list of ratepayers should be used in preference to municipal voters' lists.

MR. FIGOTT: It was better to have more information than insufficient, and by not adopting this proposal it was possible to leave a number of names off the electoral rolls. The amendment would do no harm, for by Clauses 20 and 21 we had very good safeguards that no elector should be registered on more than one roll. To farther safeguard this matter we might provide a severe penalty for anyone voting more than once.

MR. DAGLISH: There was danger of confusion in the preparation of rolls with so many methods. The best way to insure perfect rolls was to have one method of getting names on, and that was by personal claims. Then if a voter was left off it was his own fault.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was in favour of sending the police round.

MR. DAGLISH: The police should be sent round to distribute and collect claim forms, so as to give everyone a chance of getting on the rolls.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4—Clause 35, page 7, line 10, strike out all the words after "appears" to the end of the clause, and insert the following in lieu—"on two or more divisions of the roll of any province, requiring the elector to choose the division for which he is to be registered. 2. In default of a choice being made by the elector and communicated to the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls within the time stated in the notice, the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls shall strike out the name of the elector from every division of the roll except one, to be stated in the notice":

THE PREMIER: It was originally provided that where a name was registered on more than one roll or division, a choice should be made by the voter of the electorate in which he desired to vote.

The Council had modified the provision to allow plural voting for the Council. He moved that the amendment be not agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5—Clause 36, insert the following as Subclause (2) : "The lists of municipal and roads board electors transmitted to the Registrar in accordance with Section 39":

THE PREMIER: In Clause 28 of the Bill as it left the Assembly it was provided that new names might be put on the rolls pursuant to claims or applications for transfer. The Council proposed to add the words "[or in accordance with] the lists of municipal or roads board electors transmitted to the Registrar in accordance with Section 39." He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6—Clause 39, line 3, strike out the words "province or in another":

THE PREMIER: This was an amendment consequential upon the question of the abolition of plural voting for the Council. Should plural voting for the Council be abolished the amendment would be necessary. He moved that the amendment be not agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 7—Clause 47, add the words "and notice thereof shall be given by the clerk of the court seven days at least before the holding thereof, by advertisement in a newspaper circulating in the district":

THE PREMIER: In Clause 46 of the Bill as it left the Assembly it was provided that revision courts should be held at such times and places as might be fixed by proclamation. The Council's amendment guaranteed that, whenever there was a proclamation, due notice must be given by advertisement. It was put in by way of abundant caution, though the Government would not fail to give sufficient notice of a proclamation. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8—Clause 53, Subclause (2), strike out the words "or some other effective

way," and insert the words "circulating in the district":

THE PREMIER: In Clause 52 as it left the Assembly we dealt with the question of the adjournment of a revision court when not properly constituted; and by Subclause 2 we provided that the clerk of the court should, after every adjournment, give public notice of it by advertisement in a newspaper or in some other effective way. The suggestion from the Council was that notice of the adjournment should be given in a newspaper circulating in the district. In a great majority of cases that course would be desirable, and would, no doubt, be adopted; but it might be desired to adjourn the court merely for a day, or the court might be held in a district where only a weekly paper existed, so that adjournments would have necessarily to be longer than intended. We might very well in the circumstances leave the clause as it stood when it left the Assembly. He moved that the amendment be not agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 9—Clause 105, strike out Subclause (3):

THE PREMIER: For some years past in this State the voter was required to strike out the names of candidates for whom he did not wish to vote. This method had been abolished for Parliamentary elections, but was still in use at elections of local bodies. In view of the fact that the Federal Parliament had adopted voting by means of a cross against names of selected candidates—a method of which he did not quite approve—it was wiser to adhere to the cross system, instead of having one method of voting for the Federal and another for the State Parliament. To avoid informalities ample protection was given to the voter by Clause 127 of the Bill on members' files; so that even if crosses were not affixed against the names voted for, the striking out of the names of those not voted for would make the paper valid. By the Bill as it left the Assembly, broadly speaking the voter could vote by means of crosses, or by striking out names objected to, or by both methods. He moved that the Council's amendment be not agreed to.

MR. PURKISS supported the Council's amendment. For about 50 years in Australasia and New Zealand, people had been educated to vote by striking out names objected to; and the number of informal papers had been gradually minimised. Voting by crosses was a new-fangled idea.

THE PREMIER: No; an idea in force for years in some States.

MR. PURKISS said he had never heard of it. To-day's Commonwealth elections would show an appalling list of informal voting-papers. People generally understood that a cross against a name meant an objection, and a tick approval. In voting half an hour ago for Federal candidates he was momentarily puzzled by the cross system; and this showed how difficult it was to depart from the usage of a lifetime.

MR. HASTIE: The last speaker forgot that the vast majority of British people had for years used the cross system; and the Premier's motion would enable electors to continue the practice of striking out.

MR. BATH: Not till to-day's Federal election had the cross system been introduced. At the last election the names objected to were struck out, resulting in appalling informalities. The alternative system proposed by the Government would solve the difficulty. He supported the motion.

Question passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 10 (consequential)—agreed to.

Nos. 11 to 14 (consequential)—not agreed to.

No. 15—Clause 138, Subclause 1, strike out "two" and insert "five";

THE PREMIER: This dealt with a candidate's election expenses. Clause 136 of the Bill we passed provided a maximum of £200 for a Council candidate; and the amendment sought to increase this to £500. With that he disagreed. The question was difficult to settle. Personally he considered that so long as the money was honestly spent, too much could not be expended in circulating news, addressing electors, and facilitating voting. But if a candidate had not a strong organisation behind him, his expenditure was altogether out of proportion to that of one with many volunteers to do the work. Still, it was not credible that

£500 was needed to contest a Council province; but as the Council held £200 inadequate, he favoured a compromise of £300. He moved—

That the amendment be agreed to subject to "three" being substituted for "two" (£200).

MR. HASTIE: The member for York (Mr. Burges) had said that far more than £200 was needed for newspaper advertising at a Council election. He (Mr. Hastie) did not suggest that this amendment was due to the fact of a prominent newspaper proprietor being a member of the select committee which drafted the amendments; but after the amendments were considered it was understood that the successful candidate at a recent election for the Metropolitan Province had spent considerably over £1,000, mostly in newspaper advertising, and much in paying professional canvassers.

THE PREMIER: Was advertising wrong?

MR. HASTIE: No; but did the Premier not admit that newspapers would support a man who advertised extensively?

THE PREMIER: Newspaper proprietors were just as honest as the rest of us.

MR. HASTIE: Newspapers always supported good advertisers; and the candidate who could not advertise freely would invariably find most newspapers against him. A dozen examples could be mentioned.

THE PREMIER: How else could a man make his merit known, unless he had a party to canvass for him?

MR. HASTIE: Let him go freely about, and address meetings. The Council's amendment would render impossible the election of a poor candidate.

MR. TAYLOR: A maximum of £200 was sufficient. For the Senate, the whole State being one electorate, the maximum was only £250.

THE PREMIER: That limit had not been tested by experience; nor would it suit the candidate who had not half-a-dozen Federal members to stump the country for him.

MR. TAYLOR: The section of the community to which the Premier belonged were just as anxious to assist their candidate as other sections of the community were. The Premier was the only member who had canvassed his electorate within the past 12 months to see if his seat was safe.

**THE PREMIER:** The statement was absolutely untrue.

**MR. TAYLOR:** The electorate of East Perth had been canvassed by a paid canvasser to see if the people were on the roll, and this had been done within the past six or seven months.

**THE PREMIER:** That was a very different thing.

**MR. TAYLOR:** The same was not done in other constituencies. If £250 was sufficient for an election to the Senate, then £200 should be ample for a Legislative Council election. No one saw greater evils than he (Mr. Taylor) did at the last election, for the candidate who opposed him spent over £3,000 in contesting the seat. If a candidate went to a newspaper in any part of Australia during an election and gave the newspaper an advertisement which would cost £60 or £100, that newspaper would write down the opponent and would glorify the candidate who advertised. He supported the Bill as it left this Chamber.

**MR. MORAN:** The sum of £200 should be retained. A province in Western Australia was only a little parish compared with the whole of Western Australia. It would be wise to enlarge the provinces in Western Australia as he sought to do when the Bill was going through the Assembly. If the provinces were larger the amount might be increased. As there were 10 provinces, £200 for each province was quite sufficient. The members in another Chamber needed protection against rogues.

**THE PREMIER:** The desire he had was to get the Bill through, and from the position taken up by the Council that body would not accept £500. If the Bill were sent back to the Assembly again insisting on the £500, he (the Premier) would accept £500 rather than lose the Bill. He thought the Council would agree to £300.

**MR. MORAN:** This was not the stage to state that.

**MR. DAGLISH:** The object of another place in altering the clause was explained by the succeeding amendment. It was not for the purpose of making the views of candidates known to the electors by advertising, but for the purpose of buying up more election agents. That was a

fair assumption from the succeeding amendment.

Question passed, the Council's amendment as amended agreed to.

No. 16—Clause 139, Subclause 5, strike out "one election agent," and insert "election agents."

**THE PREMIER:** One election agent was allowed for an election to the Council, and it was suggested that Council candidates should be allowed one election agent in each division; that a candidate for the Assembly being allowed an election agent, therefore a province which contained several Assembly districts should be allowed an election agent for each division of a province. There was a certain amount of reason in that. If a big province had to be contested, local organisations had to be run, committees formed, and advertising paid for, and a candidate might need an election agent in each division. He moved that the Council's amendment to strike out "one election agent" be agreed to, and that the following words be inserted in lieu:—

"one election agent, or in the case of elections for the Council, one election agent for each division of a province."

**MR. TAYLOR:** By using the term "divisions," it might lead to complications, as there were magisterial districts on the goldfields. The Premier intended that a Council candidate could only employ an agent for each electorate in the province.

**THE PREMIER:** Yes. When Assembly electorates formed part of a province, they became divisions of the province.

**MR. TAYLOR:** If the amendment were agreed to, a candidate for the Council could employ an election agent for each Assembly electorate.

Question passed, the Council's amendment (as amended) agreed to.

No. 17—Page 28, line, insert the following:—

*Penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.*—Being the clerk or secretary of a municipality or road board neglecting to transmit to the Registrar the list of electors as required by Section 39.

**THE PREMIER:** This amendment was consequent on those already dealt with as to municipal rolls, and it provided an obligation or penalty upon a clerk or secretary of a municipality or roads board who failed to make a return provided by Clause 39, which required that in the



month of December in each year a list had to be transmitted to the electoral registrar. The amendment provided a penalty not exceeding £20 for failure to send in the return.

MR. HASTIE: Secretaries of roads boards at times employed persons to make out these lists.

THE PREMIER: There would be no objection to amending the amendment by altering the words "the list" to read "a true list." He moved that the amendment be amended by striking out the word "the" and inserting "a true."

Question (as amended) passed.

No. 18—Clause 154, strike out the whole:

THE PREMIER: This clause dealt with the expending of money on behalf of a candidate. The Council had struck out the clause, and inserted a new clause [see amendment 21] as follows:—

If any person purporting to act for and on behalf of a candidate incurs or authorises any electoral expense without the written authority of the candidate or of his agent, authorised in writing, he shall be guilty of a contravention of this Act.

The object of the new clause was to make clear that if a person expended money "for and on behalf of a candidate," without authority in writing, he committed an offence. The words "on behalf of" might be interpreted in a wider sense than the words "in the interest of," now struck out. He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

MR. TAYLOR: If a person spent money without the written authority of the candidate, would he be liable to a penalty?

THE PREMIER: Not if he spent his own money.

MR. TAYLOR: In the employment of cabs, for instance, members knew that cabs were used at elections, and invariably the money for them came out of the candidate's pocket.

THE PREMIER: If a person spent his own money on behalf of a candidate, there was no reason why he should have written authority from the candidate for doing that.

MR. JACOBY: Would this clause thoroughly protect the candidate against any unscrupulous person spending money in such a way as to implicate him?

THE PREMIER: If the candidate verbally authorised a person to expend money, and if that person did not obtain the candidate's written authority, the person who expended the money would be liable. If a candidate had several agents and gave an open hand, and each agent spent a sum of money, the candidate would be liable. Any limitation of expenses should make the candidate careful as to what authority he gave for spending money.

MR. DAGLISH: To strike out the clause would be likely to break down the limit of expenses, as it would give to a candidate the opportunity for some person to expend money on the candidate's behalf. If the amendment were accepted, only the candidate would be responsible; but if the clause stood as it left this Chamber, both the candidate and the person expending the money would be liable.

THE PREMIER: Supposing a friend wanted to assist a candidate, should not the friend be allowed to spend his own money in doing so?

MR. DAGLISH: Not if the expenditure brought the total above the limit stated in the Bill. The object should be to limit the amount of expenditure by or on behalf of a candidate, because if not limited there would be the opportunity of exceeding the limit so long as the candidate handed the money to a friend to be expended on his behalf, and then neither the candidate nor the friend would be liable. The money might be expended in bribery of various kinds. He knew of cases in this State in which men had been returned to another place through the lavish expenditure of money in an election.

Question passed, the clause struck out. The consequent new clause dealt with later.

[Sitting suspended for 10 minutes.]

No. 11—New clause 39, List of municipal or roads board electors:

THE PREMIER moved that the Council's amendment be amended by striking out paragraph (c), and inserting in lieu the following subclause:—"The Registrar shall enter on the proper roll for the province the name and particulars and qualifications of every person who appears by such lists to be entitled to be

registered;" also that the Council's amendment as amended be agreed to. This would limit the use of the lists to provinces, and they would not apply to electorates.

Question passed, the Council's new sub-clause as amended agreed to.

Nos. 20 and 21 (consequential)—agreed to.

No 22 (consequential)—not agreed to.

No. 23—Second schedule, *Form F*:

**THE PREMIER:** This was the form of the schedule in which the information supplied by municipalities and roads boards had to be forwarded, giving the name, description of property, and annual rateable value. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

**MR. FIGOTT:** Would the First Schedule need to be altered?

**THE PREMIER:** Yes; it would be a consequential amendment, seeing that the first line of the schedule repealed certain sections of the Constitution Act which were re-enacted in Part III. of the Bill. As Part III. had been struck out, it was necessary to strike out as a consequential amendment the line of the schedule repealing the sections of the Constitution Act.

Resolutions reported.

## REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL.

### COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of 18 amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered, in Committee; **MR. FOULKES** in the Chair.

No. 1—Clause 2, at the beginning of the clause insert the words "Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, to the contrary," and strike out the words "Under the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1903," in lines 1 and 2:

**THE PREMIER:** The first two of these amendments were proposed in the Council on behalf of the Government, with the object, as in the Electoral Bill, of making this Bill stand by itself. The three Bills were part of one scheme; but it was proposed by the amendment to provide that whether the other Bills—Constitution Act Amendment Bill and Election Bill—were agreed to or not,

this Bill should stand. The Redistribution of Seats Bill was the most important measure we had had to deal with, and was most urgently needed; for although the Electoral Bill was very valuable and desirable, he believed the Redistribution Bill was the most important of the three measures dealt with in this connection. This Bill was most urgently demanded, and was one by which alone we could rectify those inequalities which we knew to exist in the Assembly electorates. For that reason we were anxious that this Bill should stand by itself; and these amendments were moved in the Legislative Council on behalf of the Government. In Clause 2 we wanted to insert at the beginning of the clause the words "Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899, to the contrary," and to strike out the words "under the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1903," in lines 1 and 2. The latter measure was, of course, not yet in force, but the effect of this amendment would be that so far as the districts and provinces were defined by the Constitution Act of 1899 they would be controlled by the provinces and districts defined in this Bill; thus enabling us to treat this Bill entirely on its own merits and by itself. He moved that the first amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2—Clause 3, line 2, strike out all the words after "Assembly," and insert the following as Clause 3:—

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899, the fifty Electoral Districts shall, until otherwise determined by Parliament, be designated by the names stated in the first column of the Second Schedule to this Act, and the boundaries of each electoral district shall be as described in the second column of the said schedule.

**THE PREMIER:** This amendment applied the same principle to electoral districts as was applied in the previous clause to provinces. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3—Add new clause: Seats of members of Council unaffected by change of boundaries of Provinces:

**THE PREMIER:** In view of the fact that we were providing for new provinces

and districts, this clause was put in by way of abundant caution. There was a similar section in the Constitution Act of 1899, and in the earlier Act. Members would see that this clause related only to where boundaries of provinces were altered. In regard to new provinces, different considerations would arise; but where it was a mere question of altering boundaries, it would clearly be inexpedient to have a general election of both Houses. Whether the amendment of the boundaries went so far as to justify a joint dissolution would involve the question whether those members who represented the provinces affected should vacate their seats. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

MR. PIGOTT did not like the idea of this clause being passed, because we had seen in the action of another place, which he did not wish to disparage in any way, the reasons for putting in this clause. If a province were cut out say in the South-West portion of the State, and a new province created in the North portion, then with this clause in the Bill there would be no occasion to have a new election in the provinces so altered; yet it would be an absurd position for a Parliament to be in if in the case of a redistribution of seats to any great extent the Council could still be represented by members for provinces which had ceased to exist, those members continuing to act until the end of the term for which they were elected. Voters in a province so altered might be transferred to another province; yet with this clause in the Bill the position would be that a new province might be created for the goldfields, an existing province being taken away from the South-West portion of the State, and the same members continuing to sit for those provinces as if no alteration had taken place. If this clause had been in the Bill when it went to the Upper House there would not have been so much opposition to the redistribution of provinces as passed by this House, as we knew there had been. He felt confident of that, and he believed that the additional province for the goldfields would have been accepted by the Upper House if this provision had then been in the Bill; but when it came to the necessity for a dissolution of the Upper House as a consequence of creating that new province,

then the Council thought fit to throw out the provision made by this Chamber. He could see no possible chance of having a redistribution of seats for the Upper House with such a clause as this.

THE PREMIER: These words were not so far-reaching as the words in the prior Acts of 1896 and 1899, because we were simply dealing with alteration of boundaries. He did not think the hon. member need seek for ulterior motives in the matter. [Mr. Pigott: That was not so.] It would be undesirable not to have a provision like this to meet those cases where we altered the boundaries by readjustment of various districts without creating any substantial difference in the representation itself.

MR. PIGOTT: It might make a big difference.

THE PREMIER: That would be dealt with in the Bill itself.

MR. PIGOTT: What he was thinking of was any future amendment, say in 50 years.

THE PREMIER: Whatever scheme was adopted, there must be some alteration of the boundaries, because we were readjusting and making new districts.

MR. PIGOTT: Supposing the House insisted on the schedule, would the Premier then agree to this clause remaining?

THE PREMIER: That would be creating a new province, and if such alteration were made the hon. member would be justified in advising the House to recommit that clause.

MR. HASTIE: With what had been said by the leader of the Opposition he had great sympathy, and he would vote for a double dissolution. It was hardly conceivable that we could make an alteration in the boundaries of the Assembly without affecting the Council electorates.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4—Add New Clause: Amendments to be passed by absolute majority of members of Council and Assembly:

THE PREMIER moved that the amendment be agreed to. The Constitution Act of 1899 provided that when certain Bills were passed they should be passed by a certain majority.

MR. HASTIE: This seemed a new idea altogether. The Council went out of their way to say by what kind of a

majority the Assembly should pass any alteration of this Bill. He (Mr. Hastie) understood that an absolute majority of the whole number of members was required on Constitutional matters alone. Supposing we inserted this new clause, would that legalise the matter? In a certain Bill we indicated that the quorum of another place should always consist of half the number of members, and that was indignantly thrown out by the Council. We should refuse to agree to the Council's amendment.

**THE PREMIER:** By this Redistribution of Seats Bill we were taking from the Constitution Act what had been there before. The seats held by members were defined not by the Redistribution of Seats Bill but by the Constitution Act, and these alterations put in the Redistribution of Seats Bill were themselves an amendment of the Constitution, and had to be dealt with and defined by Clause 23. The Council said, "You are making a departure now; you are taking a new step; you are taking out from the Constitution Bill matters which in the past always have been there. If you do that, you should pass that legislation with the same majority as you would have to pass it with if it remained part of the Constitution Act." He very much questioned whether the Council would recede from that position. There were very strong expressions of opinion that the Council would not agree to the old practice being departed from.

**MR. HASTIE:** No Government would endeavour to bring forward a Redistribution of Seats Bill unless it was known what they were going to do, and unless every member of the House had an opportunity to come forward and vote for or against it. Another point by the Premier was that the Council had very strong feelings in this matter, and the hon. gentleman gave a hint that they might object to the Bill altogether if they did not get their way.

**THE PREMIER:** No.

**MR. HASTIE** did not think there was really much in that. The other place had been so pampered by always getting its own way that, like a spoilt child, it had got to believe that it had only to ask for a thing and the Premier would agree to it at once. If the Premier would join in sending back this clause and tell

the Council exactly our opinion, there was very little risk that the Council would for a comparatively small matter of this kind wreck the Bill.

**MR. DAGLISH:** Should this clause be in a Redistribution of Seats Bill? It was really in the nature of a constitutional provision, and if it appeared in the measure it should, in order to be effective, be in the Constitution Act. If it appeared in any measure but the Constitution Act, it could not be binding on any future Parliament. We should hesitate to take a step which might lead us into a very peculiar position and would assert the right of the two Houses of Parliament to continually tinker with the constitution without altering the Constitution Act itself. We should see measures of all sorts having constitutional provisions in them which had no right to be passed without the concurrence of an absolute majority of the House. He would urge that the Speaker should be consulted on this question before the House took the strong step recommended by another place and advocated by the Premier, because as far as he was able to judge this was wrong from a constitutional point of view, and wrong in creating a precedent which might hereafter be applied to all sorts of Bills, some of them possibly being even private Bills.

**MR. MORAN:** If it were desirable that a majority alone should interfere with a constitutional matter like this, let us leave it in the Constitution Act; but if we took it out of the Constitution Act and made it an ordinary measure, common sense at once dictated that it should be dealt with according to the procedure adopted in relation to ordinary Acts. But lawful or unlawful, he opposed this on account of the reason for which it was enacted. This was an additional attempted encroachment by another place, to steadily resist popular government in Western Australia by placing another bar in the way of carrying out such constitutional reform.

Question negatived, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 5—First Schedule, North-West Province, strike out "North-West" and insert "North":

**THE PREMIER:** A question would arise as to the new province, and he

suggested to the leader of the Opposition that this be dealt with in regard to amendment 8 in relation to the word "Swan."

MR. PIGOTT: Let them be all taken together, as they all depended on the one.

THE PREMIER: Yes. As far as the first three amendments were concerned, they were simply amendments of the names by which the provinces were to be known. The whole question could be threshed out at once, and if we decided to keep the schedule as it stood we should refuse to accept any suggestion or amendment regarding the other places; on the other hand, if we accepted any amendment at all, we should accept the lot. Everything hinged round the inclusion of the word "Swan" as to whether we should agree to take out the goldfields province and put it into the agricultural districts. The matter could be debated on this amendment. As that met the view of hon. members, he moved:

That the amendment be agreed to.

MR. MORAN: The only fruit that came to the party in this House which stood firm for more popular representation in both Chambers was the amendment by the leader of the Opposition on the occasion of the historic fight in the early hours of morning, which amendment was then considered to be a distinct advantage, and provided the inclusion of an extra province for the goldfields. It was felt that another Chamber would by that amendment be brought a little closer to the principles of popular representation, and he hoped that the House would be firm on a principle of this kind rather than, at the first brush, give way to the Upper Chamber, whose aggressiveness at present showed that popular representation in that Chamber was a considerable distance off. The matter at stake was infinitesimal to the great principle involved—that of popular representation, which must, at some future time, come to pass in this State. Incidentally the question had arisen in another place—and it was a new contention—that it was altogether out of court for either House to interfere with the affairs of another House in constitutional matters. This contention practically meant that for all time the Assembly could reform itself as much as it

wished, but could never interfere with the representation of another House. Where did that doctrine come from? Where had it ever been so contended in Australia or any other part of the world? The great fights in the Eastern States had been around this very question—the steady advance of the Lower House towards popular representation and the steady defence on the part of the Upper House against it. He (Mr. Moran) would always resist this new contention. The Constitution as a whole was equally debatable in either place. Another place had an equal right to interfere with the representation in this Chamber, and was supposed to do so, just as we had the entire right to discuss and argue and carry into effect our principles to see that the limited number of voters for the Upper House should be properly represented. A firm stand now meant an early battle for reform government; a weak stand now meant deferring the matter and strengthening the position of the opponents to reform very materially. Western Australia lagged behind the other parts of Australia in the Constitution of her Houses of Parliament, and also in regard to the Lower Chamber. There was more inequality of representation in our Lower Chamber than in any other Lower House in Australia.

THE PREMIER: We wanted to put it right in this Bill.

MR. MORAN: We went a very little way towards it. Should this Bill be carried, we would be just about where we started from. The only distinct advantage was the advance made on the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition that the Upper Chamber should be liberalised. It was recognised that all reform must go through that Upper Chamber, so we should take every opportunity of liberalising that Chamber. He appealed to the direct Opposition to stand shoulder to shoulder with those facetiously termed the "cave dwellers" during the recent fight in defence of popular government, to the very end of the fight. He hoped the Government would preserve the right of this Chamber to deal as we thought fit with both Chambers. No colour should be given to the contention that one Chamber could not interfere with the Constitution of another Chamber.

Should we admit this for a moment, we must admit for all time that another place were the sole arbiters of their own constitution. The man who supported that contention would be a traitor to the best interests of the people's representation.

THE PREMIER hoped we would now get to business. It was not a question as to whether we had or had not a right to interfere with the Constitution of another House, for our powers were clear in that connection. During the course of a discussion like this, one heard a number of peculiar contentions raised, not only in the Council but in the Assembly. He heard most startling contentions put forward in this House; but he did not think we should pay serious attention to them, or to those put forward in another Chamber. Every Bill needed the consent of both Houses, and our duty was to express our opinion in the same way as the Council expressed theirs. He approved of the amendment. When the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition was first put forward it seemed attractive, but when he (the Premier) went into the figures subsequently he failed to see any justification at all for an extra goldfields province. He disagreed entirely with the observations of the member for West Perth when he told us that in that great and historic battle a compromise was arrived at. The battle had waged for a very long time, and it was mostly finished before the so-called compromise was arrived at. He was not aware that it led to a cessation of the so-called great and historic battle. How were we going to liberalise the Legislative Council by the proposal of the leader of the Opposition? We heard from the member for West Perth so many high-sounding platitudes about liberalising the Legislative Council by that proposal, but did we liberalise the Council by giving the minority on the goldfields greater representation than other parts? Was there something about the goldfields atmosphere that candidates the goldfields sent to the Council were more democratic than those sent from elsewhere? One of the most important changes in the Constitution brought about by this Bill was the reduction of the qualification of members of the Legislative Council, and he (the Premier) was not aware that every gold-

fields member voted in favour of that reduction, while he was not aware that throughout the whole of the controversy around this Bill goldfields members had proved themselves more democratic or less conservative than members returned by other parts of the State. In dealing with this question, therefore, it was not a matter of geography, but a matter of the individual, conservative or liberal, whether from the goldfields or any other portion of the State. We would not liberalise the Council by manipulating the provinces on the present suffrage. The only method was to adopt a widened franchise. Whether the extra province went to the goldfields, or to the coast, or to other parts of the State, we could depend that the same class of men, holding the same political views, would be returned to the Upper House. We would never liberalise the Upper House by imagining that geography would affect political views. We could only do it by broadening the franchise upon which members were elected. The provinces on the Eastern Goldfields contained 4,500 votes. In dealing with this question we must judge the provinces by the number of voters on the roll to-day. We could not surmise and imagine what might happen if certain amendments were made. All we could do was to take the available data, for once we passed beyond that, it invariably became a question as to whether a widened franchise would relatively increase the voting strength for any one part of the State over any other part, and this was a point upon which every member would have a different opinion. We were mainly urged to secure a redistribution of seats because of the inequality which existed in the representation in the Assembly, where we had one electorate of 10,000 voters and another with a comparatively few hundred. It was desired to remove these inequalities as far as possible, and that should be our main object in dealing with this Bill. What reason at all was there for interfering in the distribution of the Council's provinces? Who had asked for that; and what data had been adduced in favour of it? We knew the reasons given, and the arguments adduced, to emphasise the inequalities in the Assembly representation, but no information was adduced so far as the

provinces were concerned when they were under discussion. What was the demand from outside the House? We knew of the inequalities that existed so far as our electorates were concerned. No such inequalities existed so far as the provinces were concerned; or if they did exist, were members of this House going to emphasise them by not agreeing to this amendment? It did not matter where a man came from, his opinions were not affected by geographical position, and this was shown by what took place in the Legislative Council. These two provinces contained 4,500 voters, and why should they be given three more members? In the case of the South Province there were 806 electors, that province including Mt. Burges, Dundas, and Yilgarn electoral districts. Of course he was speaking of the electoral law as it stood, for he wanted members to deal with the data we had, and not some data which did not exist. Take facts as we knew them. These two goldfields provinces contained 4,500 voters, and of this number the South Province had 806, and the North-East Province (containing the Golden Mile electorates) had 3,683 voters. Thus Kalgoorlie, Hannans, and Boulder, with 2,500 voters, controlled these two provinces; therefore this gave the control to those living on the Golden Mile. He did not see that the Golden Mile should have better people than were found in Perth or other populous centres. The population of the Golden Mile were living on the miners, and why should men living there feel greater consideration for others or be more liberal in politics than were men living in the metropolitan districts or in Fremantle? In the Metropolitan Province were 4,888 voters, and these were more than the total voters in the South Province and the North-East Province combined. Even under the existing electoral law, it would be seen we gave to Kalgoorlie, Hannans, and Boulder a controlling influence. Take again the Metropolitan Province with about 5,000 voters, the Metropolitan-Suburban Province with 3,389 voters, and the West Province (embracing Fremantle) with 3,377 voters. In one case there were 5,000 voters, and in each of the others only about 3,000 voters. Should better representation be given to the

Golden Mile than was given to provinces which had more than four times as many voters? If one-third more representation were added to these two goldfields provinces, we would be giving nine members to three provinces which had an average of 1,500 voters each. Where was the democratic principle about that? Let us see if geography altered the views of representatives. Whatever were the figures, there were at present only two goldfields provinces, and there were only 4,500 voters in them; so there being only 4,500 voters available for three provinces, if an extra province were created on the goldfields, and subdividing those constituencies into three, the average would be 1,500 voters in each. Were members in this House prepared to say that whilst the Metropolitan Province with 5,000 voters should have only three members, three other provinces controlled by the Golden Mile and having only 1,500 voters each should be represented by nine members? Two of these three provinces were absolutely controlled now by the Golden Mile; and whilst these few voters had six members, the Metropolitan Province had only three, the Metropolitan-Suburban only three, and the West Province only three. If the desire was to secure a liberalisation of the Council by increasing its numbers, he did not see how that could be done unless the franchise were altered; but if we could secure what was called this great liberal reform by readjusting provinces, why not be consistent and say that as the Metropolitan Province had 5,000 voters and the Metropolitan-Suburban Province had 3,500 and the West Province had 3,300, making nearly 11,000, the democratic principle should be applied by giving to these 11,000 voters three extra members? If we did so, the Metropolitan Province would still be the most populous in the whole of them. But when dealing with agricultural areas, the objection was that they had a small population; yet when dealing with goldfields provinces, a claim was made on behalf of a minority which claim was refused to farmers in the agricultural provinces. These 4,500 voters on the Eastern Goldfields were now divided between two provinces, and if they were subdivided into three provinces the average of voters would be about 1,500 for each province.

So far as he could see, in the Council the members who represented goldfields provinces were not more liberal than those who represented other provinces, and in saying this he preferred to judge a tree by its fruits. It was idle to say that members returned by goldfields provinces were more democratic than those returned by coastal provinces. Under the scheme proposed by the leader of the Opposition, the control of both the East and the South Provinces would be with the Golden Mile, because the East Province under that scheme consisted of Boulder, Hannans, Hannans West, and Ivanhoe, and these would be controlled on the voting strength in the proportion of two to one by Boulder. That East Province was the Golden Mile, and he was right in saying that it was purely a Golden Mile constituency. The South-East Province, consisting of Coolgardie, Dundas, Kalgoorlie, and Yilgarn, would have a voting strength of about 1,900 voters, of which number Kalgoorlie would have 1,132.

MR. HASTIE: Not if you reduced the franchise.

THE PREMIER: When we were discussing the Redistribution of Seats Bill there was no more frequent interjector than the member for Kanowna, who kept saying that the existing rolls were not up-to-date; that there were more people in the goldfields electorates than were represented on the rolls. He (the Premier) wanted to stick to the figures we had got. The proposition now was to deal with the distribution of provinces on the figures available. No member could prove that the reduction of the qualification would relatively give to the goldfields so large an increase over the coast, or that the goldfields would occupy relatively a different position. From what the provinces now showed, no member could prove that there would be a great difference relatively if the franchise were lowered. No member could prove that. To make bald statements did not carry us any farther. There were just as many small tenements in and around the metropolitan area as would be found in any other part of the State. So far as our experience had shown, the electoral development of the metropolitan area had kept pace with the electoral development elsewhere.

Why should this increased representation be given to the Golden Mile, if based entirely upon population, and not given elsewhere? Why should the South-East Province, which contained less than 2,000 voters, have greater power or equal power with the Metropolitan Province, with nearly 5,000 voters, or the Metropolitan-Suburban with upwards of 3,000, or the West with upwards of 3,000? This suggestion of the member for West Kimberley gave to the Golden Mile a special representation which it was not entitled to, and he (the Premier) would be glad to watch how the goldfields democrats voted on the question; to see whether they were prepared to give a special value and power to a minority in and about the Golden Mile which they would decline to give to a similar minority outside the Golden Mile. Let members take the average of three goldfields provinces, 1,500, and compare it with the number of voters for the East Province where we had 2,196. Was there any reason why we should take a province where they had 2,196 voters and add it to another province to increase the numbers? For what purpose? To give to the Golden Mile increased representation on a minority vote. If we adopted this scheme and combined those two existing provinces running from Toodyay to Albany, we should be giving a larger province than the goldfields themselves were now; certainly larger than they would be with an average of 1,500, the largest number being 2,000. It might be said that comparing 800 voters of the South Province with nearly 4,000 in the North-East there was need for readjustment; but that was a need for readjustment as between those two provinces.

MR. HASTIE: What were the figures for the South-West Province?

THE PREMIER: For the present South-West Province, 1,700. The suggestion of the member for West Kimberley was to combine the South-East Province, which contained 1,241 voters, with the East Province, containing 2,196 voters. If that were done we should have a province containing nearly 3,400 voters. Let us take the suggestion made by the Council. The South Province would, roughly speaking, contain about 2,000 voters, not more than 2,000 on our present list; in the North-East we had about



2,400; so we almost secured equal representation with 4,500, there being about 2,000 in one district and the balance in the other. Those provinces were not unduly populous, and there was no reason why special consideration should be given to the Golden Mile. There was a large aggregation of population existing there, but the Golden Mile would be in no better or worse position than populous centres in the metropolitan area. We proposed to give them under the present scheme a province containing 2,000, as opposed to a province (the metropolitan) more than twice the size, and a province (the Metropolitan-Suburban) more than one-third larger. In relation to the agricultural electorates, if we adopted the scheme of the member for West Kimberley we should be creating an agricultural province extending from Toodyay to Albany, and containing over 3,000 voters, and the hon. member suggested that we should put that large extent of agricultural country on exactly the same footing as the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, and on a footing a long way inferior to that of the Golden Mile, making the province the second largest in the State. We were asked to believe that was a liberalising scheme, and to say that 3,400 farmers were only to have the same voting strength as 1,500 men on the Golden Mile. That was called democracy!

MR. HASTIE: What about the Assembly?

THE PREMIER: They had their fair allowance, and the goldfields had their fair allowance also. The Council's proposition was to give the two provinces, one having 2,000 electors and the other 2,400 or 2,500. That was strongly in favour of the goldfields provinces, when compared with the Metropolitan-Suburban and the West. Taking the agricultural province, the Council gave the South-West 1,800 votes, which was close to the number for the South Province, which had a little over 2,000. The South-East Province, the smallest of the agricultural ones, contained only 1,241 votes. The Council proposed in regard to the East Province, which was an agricultural province, to give to 2,620 voters three members; to the Southern Province three members for 2,000; and to the North-East Province three members for

2,400. Under this scheme of the Council those two goldfields provinces would occupy fourth place; but if we adopted the scheme of the member for West Kimberley, he (the Premier) did not know what position they would occupy, because they had only an average of about 1,500 voters, whilst we had the amalgamated provinces of the South-East and the East containing between them 4,500 voters.

MR. JACOBY: What were the South-West figures in the Council's scheme?

THE PREMIER: About 1,800. Under the scheme of the leader of the Opposition, the Swan electorate, which the Council put into the East Province, would belong to the South-West, and the number would be then about 2,200; so that, really, under the scheme put forward by the member for West Kimberley, we should be giving the goldfields very special treatment. If we took the scheme of the hon. member, we should have three Eastern Goldfields provinces with 4,500 electors, and two agricultural provinces with 5,800 electors; two agricultural provinces having 1,300 more voters than the three Eastern Goldfields provinces. When we reached the subject of interests, we at once came to that thorny question as to the colour to be given to the interest attributed to the Central Province. Some thought one thing, and some another. In the Central Province, Cue, Mount Magnet, and North Murchison had a voting power of 656, while Geraldton, Greenough, Irwin, and the Murchison had a voting power of 665, there being thus a slight majority to the agricultural districts of that province; but he personally believed that the 656 votes were far more effective in an electoral sense than the 665 votes. Cue and Geraldton, roughly speaking, had about the same number of votes; but once we got into districts outside Geraldton there was a difficulty in collecting votes. The figures, however, were very evenly balanced in the Central Province, and members could see that two men representing that province were not returned by farmers—the Hon. B. C. O'Brien and the Hon. J. A. Thomson.

MR. HASTIE: Both of these gentlemen got a big majority of farming votes,

and Mr. Thomson was not living in the province.

MR. JACOBY: Neither of these gentlemen was opposed by farmers.

THE PREMIER: Any gentleman contesting that province would rather have the 656 votes controlled by Cue. The member for Kanowna contended that the existing figures would be disturbed by the fact that there would be a greater relative increase on the goldfields if the franchise were broadened. Assuming the hon. member was correct, even then the relative increase would not, so far as the Eastern Goldfields were concerned, entirely overcome the glaring absurdities that would exist if the proposal of the member for West Kimberley were carried out. How could members seriously say that the goldfields provinces would increase from 1,500 voters to say 4,800, the voters for the Metropolitan Province? But assuming that the increase would be more rapid on the goldfields than on the coast, what would be the position in the Central Province? At present the agricultural vote and the mining vote were pretty even, though the agricultural vote would be increased to a small extent by the fact that the boundary of the province was to be extended farther south.

MR. HASTIE: There was a lot of settlement going on there now.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member now used an argument he would not allow a Minister to use; but if the hon. member was correct in saying that there would be a larger relative increase of voters for the Upper House on the goldfields, did that not guarantee beyond the possibility of doubt that the Central Province was entirely a goldfields province? Therefore the mining interest would have its proper representation. The whole contention of goldfields members was, "In view of our interests, give us three provinces." He (the Premier) had said all along that goldfields members had their three provinces, because the Central Province was a mining province. However, if the contention was correct that there was to be a larger relative increase of voters on the goldfields, the Central Province would be a goldfields province; but if that contention was not correct and there would not be that relative increase on the goldfields, could

members for the Golden Mile seriously vote for the proposal of the member for West Kimberley to throw together two agricultural provinces with an average of 1,800 voters, and have three goldfields provinces of 1,500 voters each. He hoped the House would not agree to that proposal.

MR. BATH: Why did the Premier not use that argument in speaking about the Assembly electorates?

THE PREMIER had done so, but the hon. member was dense.

MR. PIGOTT had listened with great interest to the arguments used by the Premier, but one could not help thinking how vastly they differed from the arguments the Premier used when introducing the schedule of eight provinces in the first instance. Before going into the question of the retention of the third goldfields province, if members would look at the Bill which was brought down to the House by the Government, they would see very plainly that, if this third goldfields province was to be cut out, there was no necessity for having three provinces for the agricultural interest. The Premier must be of that opinion, otherwise he could never have gone so far as to bring down a Bill in which he did not believe. Members should perceive that the Premier brought down the schedule of eight provinces as being in his opinion the fairest and most complete redistribution of seats for the Upper House, giving two goldfields provinces and two agricultural provinces. Now the Premier said that, on account of the great inequalities of population, we were to give the agriculturists nine representatives in the Upper House. It was no use going into the question of the number of electors in the metropolitan district, because all knew that in the Metropolitan Province there was a greater number of voters than in any other province. That was always expected, so that for the purpose of this argument we could leave out the Metropolitan Province.

THE PREMIER: What about the goldfields metropolis?

MR. MORAN: There was only one metropolis in any State.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier's contention was that the Golden Mile would control six seats in the Upper House if the alternative redistribution were adopted. The argument still held good for the

present scheme of redistribution. The Premier made no point in that connection. A Redistribution of Seats Bill was introduced by the Government because a promise was given that a reform Bill should be passed through, and when the second reading took place he (Mr. Pigott) suggested that it would be better if the Government had brought down in the Bill only their proposals regarding reform and redistribution for the Lower House, leaving all matters regarding the Council blank. If that course had been adopted we would have been in exactly the same position we occupied to-day, and a great deal of debate would have been saved. If the people were earnest in the wish for reform they would not be content with the reform the present Bill, as sent back to us by the Upper House, gave, and if we were to have reform in the Constitution of our Parliament it was not to be a reform of the Lower House only, because no matter what legislation was passed through, unless some alteration were made in the Constitution of the Upper Chamber, it would be very hard for the Lower House to pass any new legislation that did not happen to be acceptable to the Upper House as constituted to-day. He came to the conclusion that the people of Western Australia were not crying out for this reform or asking for it to any great extent, certainly not to the extent the Government tried to make us believe. No interest was taken in the matter by the people; but if members were determined that a reform should take place, we should put our heads together and have a total reform that would affect both Houses, or none at all. The Premier was not quite fair in the manner in which he used his figures. The Premier complained that under the proposal we sent to the Council we would give three provinces to the goldfields for a total of 4,500 votes. The Premier forgot to mention that this Bill could not be considered entirely by itself, and that we could not possibly look at the Bill without considering the amendments to the Constitution Bill.

THE PREMIER: That aspect of the question was dealt with.

MR. PIGOTT: Only to a certain degree. The Premier used any point that would be effective in his favour.

When the Premier saw that he could make a point by saying that the Central Province would be altered if the franchise of the Upper House were liberalised, he used the argument to show that the province would be a goldfields province; but he (the Premier) refused to admit the same argument in considering the number of voters there would be in the goldfields provinces according to the Bill as we sent it to the Upper House.

THE PREMIER: One set of figures must be adopted. We could not use both.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier's argument to-day was not in accordance with the argument he used when the Bill was previously before this House. He argued previously that the Council was a House representing interests, and was not to be considered as a House representing population. In his argument to-night, because he found a disparity in the number of voters in the several provinces, he now wanted to distribute the seats over the provinces on a population basis as nearly as possible—that was on the number of voters at present on the roll for the Upper House; but even taking his figures as correct, and they were not far out, the difference between the voters at present enfranchised was that for the goldfields provinces there were 4,500 voters and for the agricultural provinces 3,600, or a difference of 900; and because they were to have 1,100 more, or an average of 500 each, they were to have only two provinces. In the case of the agricultural provinces the Premier did not apply that argument in the same way as he applied it to the Metropolitan Province. He illustrated the absurdity of having a Metropolitan-Suburban Province with 4,700 voters and a goldfields province with 1,945 voters; but the Premier did not bring in the same illustration to show how absurd it was to have a Metropolitan-Suburban Province with 4,700 voters and an agricultural province with 1,241 voters. The argument was not to apply in that case. It appeared that no matter what Bill was brought in it would be full of anomalies. He had taken great care over this measure, and he could not conceive of any means by which a schedule could be produced that would give entire satisfaction to all the people.

If we took into consideration that the Upper House was to a great extent representative of property, then the schedule as passed by this House should be accepted, and not be thrown out simply because there was a disparity in the number of voters in one or two provinces. Taking the question of interests, he did not think anybody could object to the allotment that was made when the Bill was previously before this House. Was not the Upper House representative of property more than anything else? If not, he would prefer to accept a suggestion made when the Bill was before this House, and say: "Let us cut the State into four or five provinces with six members each, or such number of members as may seem best to the majority." The effect of the Council's asking us to agree to three provinces representative of agriculture, and one of these with 1,200 voters and the other with 2,600 voters, was enough to show that the schedule should not be accepted by this House. He thought we should pass the schedule as sent forward in the Bill, and that members had made up their minds to agree to it. He knew that the second schedule had been dealt with and a compromise arrived at. In order to make up for the disparity of representation in the Lower House, it was agreed by a great number of members in this House that the schedule then before us should be accepted. He asked members now to say one way or the other whether they would stick to the opinion they held at that time, or would go into the matter afresh and re-allot the provinces. He asked them not to accept the schedule as sent down by the Council, but to accept the schedule as passed by this House when the Bill was previously before it.

MR. MORAN: The Premier had rather lost his general good form in discussing this matter. He started with a sneering reference to members who talked platitudes in this House. What was a platitude? It might be the ordinary expression of one of the highest principles. It might be a virtue to say, for instance, that the people should rule in their own House. The Premier had often talked platitudes of that kind; therefore he should not substitute sneers for arguments, and not exhibit petulance

instead of patience in dealing with provinces. There had been much talk of the geographical position as it affected the opinion of representatives; but the geographical position had been brought into consideration in dealing with the question in another place. The Premier used it himself. It was amusing to notice the dexterity with which the Premier handled figures to suit his argument. He took as his basis the figures on the roll for the Upper House; but when first explaining the Bill in this Chamber, he took the stand of interests. On the score of interests, would the Premier say that the goldfields, which were the source of three-fourths of the modern wealth and population of this State (whatever they might be in the future), and were at present the great fountain and sustaining force of our prosperity, should not have three provinces for the Upper Chamber? If we departed from the question of interests and took the only other question, that of population, here again the goldfields were not receiving full justice, or were getting only the barest justice. The population of the goldfields were a third of the population of this State, and were not getting too much representation by having three provinces. The Premier lost sight of his own basis by losing sight of the consideration that the revision of the franchise was even more important. Now the Premier would not allow for the settlement that was going to take place on the goldfields areas; but without asking him to allow for other people who were not yet there, he did not allow for people who were already on the goldfields but were not enfranchised as voters for the Upper House. The liberalising of the franchise for the Upper House would make a vast difference on the goldfields. A large proportion of the population there lived in hessian camps, and the permanent houses were few. Those were good men for all that, and there must be a greater increase on the rolls for the goldfields than for Perth or Fremantle when the franchise for the Upper House was liberalised. There were no tenements around Perth or Fremantle that were not worth £10 a year, but on the Golden Mile there was a vast collection of camps which might be barely worth £10 a year. There were

conservatives and liberals even on the goldfields. In the last elections for the Central Province, Mr. Thomson and Mr. O'Brien had to depend on the agricultural vote for the majority which elected them; and so it would seldom happen that the goldfields voter would plank for one candidate and the agricultural voter for a different candidate.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN let the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. HASTIE: To him there was one reason, and one reason alone, why the members of the other place had altered this Bill. It was purely and simply on account of their desire to grab as much representation for themselves as they possibly could. The Premier lost sight of the fact that this proposed extra province was deliberately put in as a compensation to those people who lived on the Eastern Goldfields for the very hard, harsh, and cruel way in which they were treated with regard to representation in this Assembly. Whilst we were considering the number of members to be given to the Eastern Goldfields, it was always pointed out and admitted that they had far less representation than they would have if they lived in the North, the South, or the South-West Districts; and it was by way of compromise, by way of giving them something, a little more perhaps than they were actually entitled to, that they were allowed to get this extra province. The Premier had told us over and over again that men sent by the goldfields to the other place were not the very wisest of men, not superior to other sections of the community. He (Mr. Hastie) had found them just about the average of the members returned to the other place. The object of this House had always been to popularise representation in the other place as much as possible, and the Premier himself told us that the question of electoral qualifications was far and away the most important we had to consider, showing that he intended also to increase the number of electors there and, as a necessary consequence, to increase no doubt the power and standard of those who would be elected. The hon. gentleman had told us over and over again that by fairly dividing the provinces we gave the residents of the Golden

Mile practically control of the representation of the Eastern Goldfields. That was true, and that was what the other Chamber wished us to do, or what the Premier wished us to do, by accepting the amendment of the other place. Kanowna, Menzies, Leonora, and Mount Margaret would be practically disfranchised.

THE PREMIER: Why did the hon. member wish there to be one province with 4,500 electors and three on the goldfields with an average of 1,500?

MR. HASTIE: Why should the people in his (Mr. Hastie's) district get only one-third of the amount of political representation given to people in half-a-dozen other districts?

THE PREMIER: Because they had in the Lower House members so much better.

MR. HASTIE: Then let those people have a chance to send members to the other House whom the Premier would not be able to disparage. If we were making any alterations at all, we should go as near to equality as possible. The Premier said that the people in the metropolitan districts of the goldfields could not get the same representation as people in country districts, and that they should be treated just as the people in the coastal metropolis were treated. He (Mr. Hastie) thoroughly agreed with that, and that was why he asked the House to insist upon having one extra goldfields metropolitan province. Stress was laid upon the fact that, as everything done in the Assembly was absolutely at the mercy of the Upper House, we should attach great importance to those sent to the Upper House; but the Council asked us to agree to a £25 qualification. Hundreds of people worth a great deal more than people possessing that qualification would get no votes. The £25 qualification would not affect the coastal metropolitan area to any extent, nor the goldfields metropolitan area, but outside those living on the Golden Mile, and outside the comparatively small number of people living in towns on the goldfields, no one in those districts could get a vote for the Upper House, the land being of no value outside towns. Members were anxious that the qualification should be reduced. We could go so far as to say that, if this qualification was not reduced to reasonable dimensions, very few mem-

bers would try and get an alteration in the Constitution at all, because by accepting this £25 qualification we would disqualify a very large and deserving section of the people in goldfields country districts. The Premier's figures were fairly correct, but if we had a reduction in the franchise, they would to a large extent be altered. Members should not accept the amendment of the Upper House. We should show the Council that we were very anxious to have an alteration. It must be remembered that members in the Upper House were equally divided when this matter was first under consideration, and that it was only when there was a defection of a number of their supporters the Government declared the alteration to the existing distribution of provinces should not be made. Those who desired to see the Upper Chamber exist, should insist that that Chamber should be a popular Chamber, and as representative of the people as it could possibly be.

MR. THOMAS: The Minister who was Attorney General was to be congratulated in attempting to refute the arguments previously advanced by the Minister who was Premier on a previous occasion, when a big fight was put up as to whether or not we should attempt to have some legitimate reform in the representation of the Lower House on as near as possible a population basis, and when we decided that in the schedule of provinces for the Upper House interests should be taken into consideration. The main figures given then were put before the Committee by the Premier, and we decided on a common basis for argument. We agreed that out of 118,000 electors there were 48,000 in the metropolitan area, 38,000 on the goldfields, 10,000 in the North, and 22,000 in the agricultural area. At that time he (Mr. Thomas) argued that we must either have seven provinces with 21 members or ten provinces with 30 members for the proper representation of interests in the Upper House. The Bill introduced by the Government provided for the goldfields two provinces with a quota of 19,000 electors, for the metropolitan area two provinces with a quota of 24,000 electors, three provinces for the agricultural area with a quota of 7,300, and one province for the pastoral interests with 10,000 electors. This pro-

posal was amended by a select committee which suggested the addition of another province, and the Bill left this House with the fairest possible division we could have to represent interests—nine members for the goldfields, nine for the metropolis, nine for the agriculturists, and three for the pastoralists. With a House of 21 members we would have six members for the goldfields, six for the metropolis, six for the agriculturists, and three for the pastoralists. However, the Committee considered that 30 members would be better, because the Upper House might throw out the Bill as we had not reduced our own numbers. All admitted the goldfields interests were paramount, but members agreed that the goldfields and the agricultural districts and the metropolis should have equal representation. Now the House was asked to accept the absurd and extravagant proposal submitted by Dr. Hackett to have three provinces for the metropolis with a quota of 16,000, two provinces for the goldfields with a quota of 19,000, one province for the North with a quota of 10,000, and four provinces for the agricultural districts with a quota of 5,400.

THE PREMIER: Those were Assembly figures.

MR. THOMAS: Yes; they were the only figures we could take; and these agricultural districts were to be given twice the amount of representation under this absurd proposal as was given to the isolated pastoral districts of the North. Throughout the hours of an all-night sitting he and some other members on the Opposition side fought against that method of redistribution. He had joined a party to fight as a straight-out opponent of the Government; but as the result of a long caucus meeting the leader of the Opposition made a proposal in this House and appealed to the Premier to consent to a fair and honest compromise. He (Mr. Thomas) consented very unwillingly to the decision of the caucus meeting, sinking his own desire in regard to what was due to the goldfields as a fair proportion of representation, and he agreed to act with the party to which he had become allied on this question. Their agreement was that if the goldfields could obtain an extra province with three members to represent it in the Upper House, he would not press the claim for an extra

seat for the goldfields in the Lower House. In that arrangement instead of gaining one seat in the Lower House he would gain three seats in the Upper House. To preserve the harmony of the party and to facilitate public business he consented to that compromise, though unwillingly. When the leader of the Opposition asked the Premier to accept the compromise—this was after a previous consultation between different sections—it was recognised on all sides that a fair compromise had been arrived at, and the Premier consented to it. He (Mr. Thomas), much against the grain, thus consented to join forces with the occupants of the Treasury bench in order to fight the "cave party" on that question. That was a compact entered into in writing, and he carried out his portion of it strictly to the letter. He wanted to hear now what agricultural representatives in this House had to say as to how they carried out their portion of the compact which they entered into with him. He claimed now that the proposal then submitted by the leader of the Opposition for a better defining of the provinces was the only equitable proposal submitted to the House on the question. A proportion of three provinces for the metropolitan areas, three for the agricultural districts, and three for the goldfields, was better than three for the metropolitan areas, two for the goldfields, and three for the agriculturists. To-night we had been treated with the astonishing spectacle of the Attorney General being afraid to advise himself as Premier to stick to the Bill which he introduced to this House—the spectacle of his being afraid to advise himself because of pressure brought to bear from outside; and he calmly asked this House now to agree to the amendments made in the Bill by the Upper House. We knew the history of the amendment in the redistribution of seats as affecting that Chamber. When that debate took place in the Council a test vote was taken; and Dr. Hackett, leading one side of the House against the other side, said he would accept that vote as a test and final vote. That vote was given against him, on the casting vote of the Chairman. What followed? The Bill was then delayed for three weeks until another member

could be brought from the South-West; and the very member who caused that delay now told us, through a certain newspaper, that members of this House would be guilty of obstruction unless they consented to pass the Bill as amended by the Council, and to do this within a few hours.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** It would be better if the hon. member would not refer to statements made by any member of another place.

**MR. THOMAS** was led into this by the remarks of the Premier; but at any rate he was glad to have had an opportunity of making his statement before the Chairman intervened. It was said in the *West Australian* when this Bill was before the Council, that it would be nothing short of a national calamity were the Bill as it left this House agreed to by another place; that it would create a revolution in this country if that other place agreed to the Bill as passed by the Assembly; so he told us that it would be a revolution to give equitable representation to agriculture, to mining, and to the metropolitan areas. The same paper, when its nominee had won his point, stated when the Bill was sent back to us that if we did not dispose of the Bill and about 20 other Bills in the course of two days, we would be guilty of wilful obstruction, and would be a disgrace to ourselves, a disgrace to Parliament, and a disgrace to the people who sent us here. This Bill as it went to another House was the product of members occupying these (Opposition) benches; and not once did members on these benches leave their seats to vote with the Government, but every time they made the Government leave their seats to vote with members on these benches against the "cave party." The Government knew it full well, because the *West Australian*, which he considered a Government organ, when asking the Upper House to throw this Bill out stated that it was not a Government Bill, and that if it were a Government Bill that paper could understand Mr. Kingsmill and Mr. Moss sticking to it.

**THE CHAIRMAN** again asked the hon. member not to refer to the name of any member of another place.

MR. THOMAS: The *West Australian* said there was no excuse for certain parties—he thought members knew those to whom he referred—and it stated that the measure was Mr. Pigott's. The first schedule in the Bill as we sent it to the other place, regarding the Legislative Council, was as fair a proposal as could be put before any House; but we had it thrown back at us now, and were told the Council would not accept it. The Premier accepted that. During the all-night sitting the Premier fought hard to defeat the "cave party" over this matter, but now the hon. gentleman asked us calmly to go back on our previous decision, and accept these amendments. He (Mr. Thomas) had been in the House three years, and every year at the close of the session we had Ministers standing up and asking us to agree to every single amendment the Legislative Council had moved. We had the same thing now regarding this Bill, and he asked the Premier and his colleagues, and those sitting on the same side of the House, whether for all time they were prepared, in relation to a Redistribution of Seats Bill, to be dictated to by the Upper House. He (Mr. Thomas) was not prepared to be dictated to by them in this matter. In dealing with an amendment of the Constitution we had a perfect right to express our views as to what should be done in relation to the Legislative Council. Whether or not he agreed with the schedule under discussion, he maintained that the time had come when a fight had to take place between these two Chambers; and the sooner it came and was over the better for the peace of both Houses, and for the political peace of Western Australia.

MR. DAGLISH had no sympathy with the member for Dundas, who according to his own statement entered with certain of his colleagues into an unholy alliance with the Government for the purpose of defeating the principle he was now advocating.

MR. THOMAS: Nothing was said by him about a compact being entered into with the Government. What he said was that there was a compact between him as a mining man and agricultural members sitting on the two sides.

MR. DAGLISH: There was a union for the express purpose of defeating a

desire to secure representation in this House on a population basis or something approximating to it, and the hon. member told us his reason was that the goldfields were not getting the same proportion of extra seats as the metropolitan area. The hon. member overlooked the fact that the metropolitan area had a claim, on a population basis, to a larger number of extra seats than the goldfields area had. This trouble would not have arisen if the member for Dundas and other members on the Opposition benches had supported the principle of representation on a reasonable basis of population.

MR. PIGOTT said he had been reading the hon. member's speech, and there was nothing about a population basis in it.

MR. DAGLISH: Undoubtedly what was advocated was approximate representation on a population basis. The hon. member was sheltering himself behind the fact that one could not quote *Hansard*. He (Mr. Daglish) was prepared to prove his assertion whenever opportunity occurred. He rose more particularly to point out that the present proposal dealt with by the Premier had not been altogether fairly placed by the hon. gentleman before the Chamber. The Premier spoke as though the question were one of giving representation in the Council to the metropolitan area or to the goldfields, and laid a great deal of stress on the relative population and representation of the metropolis as against the goldfields; overlooking altogether that the real issue before us was whether we should give an extra province to the agricultural area or to the goldfields. The metropolitan district was clearly entitled to a larger representation in the Legislative Council than it had, just as it was entitled to a larger representation in this House. The metropolitan area had three provinces containing 11,599 electors, or a little more than half the Council electors in the State. It had three provinces, making an average for each province of 3,860 electors, with 1,286 electors to a member. Against that the goldfields had 4,549 electors for two provinces, giving 2,274 electors per province, and 758 electors per member; whilst the agricultural and pastoral voters, amounting altogether to 6,821, had five provinces,



or a province to every 1,364 voters, and a member to every 441 voters. We had the goldfields with 4,549 electors and two provinces, as against the agricultural and pastoral voters with five provinces for 6,821, and he was prepared at any time to support the goldfields in getting a more equitable adjustment of their representation. The metropolitan area ought to receive greater consideration than it had done, but at present we could not alter that representation. The whole question was whether we should give the people on the goldfields reasonable consideration, or refuse it to them. The thickly populated districts were treated alike in both Houses. Those living in the more thickly settled districts were very unfairly treated in regard to this House, and the proposal was that we should emphasise this unfairness still farther in the representation in the Legislative Council. He hoped we should insist on the proposal as embodied in the Bill when it left this House. He said this not out of any feeling of antagonism against another place, but because he considered it time we took a very firm position on this matter of representation. It was an anomaly in the first place that a Chamber which represented only 22,000 electors should attempt to have an equal voice with a Chamber representing, as the Assembly did, 115,000 electors, or five times the number represented by the Council. We had been trying, and it looked as if we had been doing so unsuccessfully, to reduce the franchise of the Legislative Council, and that was still stronger ground for endeavouring to equalise the distribution of representation. He hoped that under the circumstances this Chamber would insist on opposing the amendment of the Legislative Council. When this matter was before the Committee, before the Bill was sent up to another place, he protested against this particular part of the schedule on the ground that it would probably be objected to in the Council, and that we were giving away a seat in the people's Chamber in exchange for a province in the Legislative Council, when we had no hope of getting that province conceded to us by another place. At that time he said an understanding had been arrived at between the leader of the

Opposition and the member for the Williams, and he was distinctly contradicted.

MR. PIGOTT: The member for the Williams admitted it; it appeared in *Hansard*.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member for the Williams denied it.

MR. PIGOTT: What the hon. member denied was that there was any compact with the Government. He admitted that there was a compact with him (Mr. Pigott).

MR. DAGLISH: Not at the time he was referring to.

MR. PIGOTT: Yes. [Interjection by Mr. MORAN.]

MR. DAGLISH: Whether there was a compact or not, the position was as he predicted. He hoped what had happened would prove a lesson to any members who chose to barter away any share of the representation in this Chamber in the future for problematical or very unlikely return in the shape of additional representation in another place.

MR. BATH: Sympathy could be expressed with the member for Dundas in his present situation, because he was like the man who went to Jericho, with regard to redistribution. The member for Dundas told us in the first place that he was in sympathy with the "cave" party in their desire for a more equitable distribution of seats in the Assembly, and that he then entered into a compact by which he agreed to make no farther demand for equitable representation in the Assembly if an extra province could be secured in the Council for the goldfields. In entering into such a compact the member for Dundas was making a very bad bargain indeed.

MR. THOMAS: The leader of the Labour party agreed to it.

MR. BATH: When there was a schedule of eight provinces before us, the direct Opposition with the member for Dundas opposed proposals which were infinitely preferable to the scheme brought down afterwards and accepted by the House for 10 provinces. Had the member for Dundas stuck to the members desiring to have more representation for the populous parts of the State, he would have been securing representation for those parts which for some time past had

been most desirous of liberalising the Council.

MR. THOMAS: The honourable member could not kick him (Mr. Thomas) more than he kicked himself.

MR. BATH: The member for Dundas supported the proposal for an extra province for another place, well knowing that the Council would not accept any amendment carried in the Assembly for the reform of the Council. The Premier argued that we should not introduce this aspect of the question, but most members would admit that the members of the Council had stated they would not accept any amendment from this House which proposed to amend the Council. It was claimed by the Council that the two Houses were distinct organisations, whereas the two Houses were parts of one whole. It was very refreshing to hear the Premier, in his attempt to defend the Bill in its present condition, advocating redistribution on a population basis. When we tried to impress on the Premier the necessity for that representation in the Assembly, we met with strenuous opposition from the Premier, who argued that we must also give regard to the representation of interests and other considerations which should not have entered into a discussion on the representation in the Assembly. The Committee accepted as a final alternative the Bill as sent up to the Council with ten provinces, an extra province to go to the goldfields. Members who supported that proposal should support it on this occasion, and we should send the Bill back to another place as we carried it in the Assembly.

MR. PIGOTT: The additional province was put in the Bill at his suggestion in the first place in order that the Bill might be saved. That was the true position.

MR. BATH: The original proposal was infinitely more equitable.

MR. PIGOTT did not think so.

MR. BATH: It was, from the standpoint of the hon. member's speeches to-night.

MR. PIGOTT: Not in the least. We should look on the Constitution of the Council as we looked on the Constitution of the Senate. As the different States were to the Senate, so should the different provinces be to the Council. The Premier

made a song about the fact that the schedule sent to the Council proposed to give three provinces to 4,500 electors, and gave only two provinces to 5,000 voters. There was only a difference of 500 in the numbers, but the Premier objected to the anomaly because the smaller number were given three seats and the larger number two. The Premier now asked us to reverse that arrangement which we had agreed upon, and to give the agricultural electors three provinces as against two goldfields provinces, simply because the agricultural districts contained 500 more voters? The figures given were the most authentic we could have. They showed that there were 5,137 voters in the agricultural provinces and 4,500 in the two goldfields provinces. Had members made up their minds that the Constitution Bill was not to become law? He felt firmly convinced, from the action taken in another place already this session, that the Bill would never become law.

MR. BATH: Was the wish "father to the thought"?

MR. PIGOTT: Not in the least. We had a promise from the Premier that he would not accept an amendment to the Constitution Bill put forward by another place, and the member for Hannans knew that the Opposition would join with the Premier in that refusal. Why was the Upper House so careful to sort out these Bills so that they would not affect one another? The fact was that the Constitution Bill was not to become law. The Upper House deleted clauses in the Electoral Bill and Redistribution of Seats Bill repealing portions of the Constitution Act. There could be no mistake—and the Government were to be blamed for it—the Constitution Bill was not to become law. We heard a lot about anomalies existing in the Bill. There were bound to be anomalies. Even the schedule amended by the Council we found full of anomalies. One agriculture province contained 1,200 voters and another 2,600, yet the Premier asked us to accept that anomaly, and to throw out the goldfields province which created a lesser anomaly. The Committee would be wrong in accepting the suggestion of the Premier. He (Mr. Pigott) went to a lot of trouble to prevent the Bill being thrown out. Everybody knew that, if

the Opposition had agreed to throw out the Bill, it was in their power to do so at any time when the Bill was before the House. However, as it was generally desired that a Bill of some sort should go through, he endeavoured to the best of his ability to get his party to support him in coming to the best compromise in order to get the Bill through. The result was that the members who fought so hard against the schedule which was sent to the Council, did not now oppose a schedule which was less equitable than the other.

MR. BATH: The hon. member should have helped the cross-benches on the Assembly schedule.

MR. PIGOTT: Did the hon. member think he (Mr. Pigott) was going to sink all his convictions to assist the hon. member?

MR. DAGLISH: Then the hon. member's convictions were against fair representation?

MR. PIGOTT: No. The member for Subiaco knew nothing about Western Australia if he talked in that strain. Would the hon. member like to see the Assembly constituted on a population basis only?

MR. DAGLISH: On something approximating to it.

MR. PIGOTT: The hon. member started at once to hedge. Would the hon. member debar the North from representation?

MR. DAGLISH: That matter was threshed out.

MR. PIGOTT: No conclusion could be come to as to what was a true basis.

MR. DAGLISH: The cross-benches gave a true basis, but the Opposition would not accept it.

MR. PIGOTT: The cross-benches did not. The proposal of the "cave party" was to give more representation to the Northampton neighbourhood.

MR. DAGLISH: The hon. member was wrong.

MR. MORAN: That was only an alternative proposal if we could not carry out the other.

MR. DAGLISH: That was a proposal put forward by the member for the Murchison on his own authority.

MR. PIGOTT: The member for the Murchison was one of the leaders of the

"cave party," and he gave place to a certain extent to the member for Cne, a member who took so much interest in this important Bill that he would not stay here to see it through. If the members of the "cave party" were earnest in their convictions, they had their opportunity again. They had turned tables several times, not on one subject but on many. The treatment of the Bill in another place had been shameful, and he could only say that nothing in the history of this Parliament would cause him to change his opinion as to what would be a fair constitution for this country. If the Council would not fall in with our views on this question, they would be doing a thing that would cut the ground from under their feet, and they should take a look into the future. He would be inclined to join in the opinion of the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman) that the time had arrived when we should do away with the second Chamber, if this was the way the second Chamber treated important measures which had been threshed out by this House. He hoped that the Committee would not agree to accept the Council's amendment, and he desired to hear the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) explain his position. That hon. member had said in a previous debate that he made no compact in the matter. He also said that an arrangement had been made between himself and the leader of the Opposition. It was the duty of the hon. member now to explain his position.

MR. DIAMOND: The sword of Damocles, which the leader of the Opposition and his followers so carefully suspended over their own heads some weeks ago, had fallen. At that time a section of this House referred to by the contemptuous name of the "cave party" tried to make the Bill compatible with democratic ideas. Apparently the Bill did not meet with favour in another place. He sympathised with the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) because on that occasion the hon. member was led away by a compact, and was not expressing his own convictions. Tonight those members of the "cave party" who had tried to send the Bill to the other House in a democratic form were to be defeated by an unholy combination. Members on the direct Opposition

benches now asked members of the "cave party" to go in an entirely different direction. He as one of the democratic party, having done his best and been defeated by the direct Opposition, would not vote to-night at the dictation of the Opposition. He would vote with the Premier in an endeavour to save the Bill, imperfect as it was; and he declined to accept the dictation of the leader of the Opposition, and was surprised at the member for West Perth being willing to accept it.

**MR. MORAN:** It was a deep regret to the "cave party" to notice the defection of one of its members representing South Fremantle. Dearly as that hon. member loved the memory of Mr. C. C. Kingston and the cause of democracy, he loved the leader of the Government better; and whenever it came to the crucial test, the Government or their policy being in danger, then the member for South Fremantle slavishly followed the leader of the Government. It was well that the people should know who were earnest in their advocacy of reform. The time had come when the direct Opposition, from whom the "cave party" got a big concession to democracy in that fight, should hang to the victory gained on that occasion, though he was afraid the defection of members like the member for South Fremantle might lose us the vote on this occasion. On their heads to-night should it be if we lost the shred of victory that was gained in the morning hours of a long fight on a previous occasion, for it was a distinct advantage to the cause of reform that the goldfields should have another province. The history of politics in this State would prove that there were more liberal ideas always held on the goldfields than in other parts of the State, and our records would prove that in nine cases out of ten the representatives of the goldfields in the Upper Chamber had voted for democratic and liberal measures as compared with the representatives of the agricultural interest, who nearly always voted for conservatism. We should therefore take the advantage of having gained this province in the Upper House for the goldfields. Even though there were fewer voters on the rolls for the Upper House in the goldfields provinces than in older parts of the State, still we must recognise that

the preponderating interest to-day was the gold-mining interest; and as the Upper House represented interests, it was an advantage to have this additional province with three more members in the Upper House to represent the goldfields. The gold-mining interest in this State was equal to all the other interests together in the production of absolute wealth; and all that the reformers claimed was one-third of the representation. On the roll as it existed to-day the goldfields were not entitled to the additional province; but if members generally were equally earnest in advocating a widening of the franchise to a £10 limit, as first proposed by the Government, the rolls under that franchise would be materially altered on the goldfields. He did not altogether blame the Government for not standing to their proposal, for they hoped to get the Bill through. For the "cave party" he had nothing but commiseration. He asked the hon. member for South Fremantle to reconsider his decision. The fate of the Government was not at issue, but the fate of popular reform was. If those who were opposed to this amendment would leave the Chamber, and an absolute majority of the House being necessary to carry an important amendment like this, the amendment could not be carried. He asked those who were opposing the amendment to leave the Chamber, for members were entitled to use every form they could to defeat an amendment like this from another place.

**THE PREMIER:** The Committee would not, he hoped, agree to the suggestion by the member for West Perth. Our duty was to discuss this question and express our opinions, accepting on each side the responsibility for our votes. He asked the House to agree to the amendment, and to bear in mind that this State needed a redistribution of seats in the Lower House. We knew there were inequalities which needed to be remedied. We took up the electoral rolls in the various electoral districts and saw there that whilst one electorate had nearly 10,000 votes, others with a few hundreds had in this House equal representation and equal power. Those were glaring inequalities which had been brought to the attention of the public and struck the minds of members of this

House, and none of us could deny that our main object in this Redistribution of Seats Bill was to remove those inequalities and give the popular voice more effective representation in the popular Chamber. He was somewhat at a loss to understand the attitude of those members who thought the question we were now discussing was of vital importance. He had frequently heard them say there was no need for a Council, that the Council should be abolished, and that all power should rest in this the people's Chamber.

MR. MORAN: That had never been advocated by him.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did not advocate that. We had before us a Redistribution of Seats Bill which whatever might be its shortcomings gave to this House more adequate expression of the popular will. Were we to sacrifice that distinct advantage because we had some disputed questions, some difficulties in relation to another Chamber? That was the point we had to consider. What was the main object of this legislation? To secure more adequate representation in the popular Chamber. So far as another Chamber was concerned, he thought that however we might manipulate the electors, however much we might group them, we should get the same main result until we got an alteration of the franchise. We should not alter the political complexion of the House one iota by not agreeing to this amendment. We should do it by insisting as far as we possibly could upon having a broadening franchise, by increasing the number of electors who would return men to the Upper House. If we had an extended franchise; a broadening view, a more democratic view would find expression not only in the goldfields provinces but also in the agricultural provinces. He did not think that democracy was determined by climatic conditions, but believed there were as good democrats on the coast of Western Australia as on the goldfields. Neither did he think there were more conservatives on the coast than there were in other portions of the State.

MR. MORAN: A great many more.

THE PREMIER was not one of those who thought so, and he was fortified by his experience of Western Australia. We

were discussing to-night what really appeared to be a subsidiary point, the grouping or regrouping of provinces. If we had another Legislative Council containing the provinces advocated by the leader of the Opposition, how much better off should we be to-morrow? Would it give us more democratic representation? Would it really not bring into another Chamber three men who would differ from the men they succeeded only in the fact that they were elected by different portions of the State?

MR. PIGOTT: That argument could be applied to redistribution for the Lower House?

THE PREMIER: Undoubtedly. Let us not lose sight of the main desire, which was to secure more equitable redistribution of the electoral power for the various districts represented in this House. We were apt in this discussion, whilst grasping at the shadow, to miss the substance. The substance was redistribution of seats for the Lower House, and he hoped we should not lose sight of that. We should bear in mind that if we wanted to secure more adequate reform in another Chamber, if we desired to see a freer expression of the public will, we must do so not by grouping conservatives in various parts of the State, but by giving an extended franchise, and securing by that means a more adequate expression of popular will.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Knowing the part which the leader of the Opposition took in connection with this subject, and how much the House was indebted to him for his efforts in assisting to have this Bill passed, he would have preferred to have voted with him on this occasion; but as it would be preferable to have this Bill in its present condition rather than oppose it, he was, under the circumstances, inclined to vote with the Government in this instance, believing that it would be in the interests of the State to send the Bill back with the amendments proposed by the Upper House. He did not feel that he was departing from his original opinions in respect to this matter, because the proposals made by the Council were in the direction he himself very much advocated in this House. They were almost in accord with the recommendations of the select committee, except

as regarded Beverley, which had been coupled with York. If that had been included in the original proposal made by the select committee, this would have been entirely in accord with the committee's recommendations. He was of opinion that the course recommended by another place would serve the best interests of the country. With regard to the understanding arrived at between himself and the member for Dundas, they had a conversation in connection with the matter, but he could not say that he felt himself entirely pledged to the hon. member. Although the hon. member made a proposal of a character which he (Mr. Piesse) agreed with in that instance, because he thought there was a prospect of getting the Bill through, he had decided to vote with the Government on this occasion, for if we did not agree to the amendments proposed there would be a prospect of losing the Bill. With regard to the compact which the member for Subiaco questioned him about on the occasion referred to, he (Mr. Piesse) never once approached the Government in relation to the matter.

MR. TAYLOR: Those members termed "cave dwellers" by the Premier objected to the compact between the Opposition and the member for the Williams to defeat their proposals. It was the general opinion that the compact was to retain the Katanning electorate in the Assembly schedule, and that an extra province was to be given to the goldfields. The member for the Williams had scored on Katanning, but the member for Dundas and the leader of the Opposition had failed to secure an extra province for the goldfields; so the compact was only kept by the member for Dundas and the leader of the Opposition. The Opposition had thus prevented the adoption of a more equitable redistribution of seats. The Minister for Lands and the member for Dundas were the only goldfields members who voted against the proposals of the cross-benches, though one other goldfields member was absent and did not vote. The Premier, who fought strenuously for the Bill as sent to the Upper House, now went back on his loyal friend the leader of the Government in the Upper House, who had fought for three weeks for the Bill as sent up from this House. Was it be-

cause the Bill was so thoroughly denounced in the columns of a leading journal? On a vote taken in the Assembly on such an important matter as this, 21 members representing 39,700 votes defeated an amendment supported by 14 members representing 48,282 votes. The Bill was carried by a majority of seven representing 8,538 voters. This showed that the "cave-dwellers" represented the most populous parts of the State. The member for South Fremantle, who had spoken so strongly against the Government and supported the proposal of the "cave-dwellers," had now dropped his democracy and was going to save the Government from defeat, as he always saved the Government when they were likely to be defeated. He (Mr. Taylor) having supported what he considered the most liberal form of redistribution would continue to do so, and he would vote against the motion of the Premier, preferring to lose the Bill rather than accept this amendment.

MR. PIGOTT, though not desiring to speak again, was forced to do so. He was exceedingly sorry to hear that the gentleman who for some months past had been working with him in the Opposition (the member for the Williams) had decided to vote on this occasion with the Government. The hon. member said he was not departing from his original ideas on this matter, and on that point the hon. member was perfectly correct, because if his ideas had not been the same a little while ago on this question as they were to-day, there would have been no need for him (Mr. Pigott) to interest himself amongst his supporters to induce them to give way to a certain extent to meet that hon. gentleman's ideas. The hon. member was not departing from his ideas in voting with the Government, but he was doing another thing which was more serious. The hon. member was departing from an agreement made with him (Mr. Pigott) as leader of the party with which the hon. member was connected. Since taking up the position of leader of the Opposition he (Mr. Pigott) had asked no member to leave his seat and give him support. The member for the Williams came to the seat he now occupied on the Opposition benches of his own free will, and not at his (Mr. Pigott's) request. Now the hon. member had broken an

agreement which he faithfully entered into with him (Mr. Pigott), an agreement to which he (Mr. Pigott) had stood, and to which his supporters had stood; and in doing so had done a far worse action than if he had departed from his original ideas on this question of redistribution.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Would the hon. member explain what the agreement was?

MR. PIGOTT would explain. When the fight on this Bill was hanging in the balance, he (Mr. Pigott) could see that it was a case of compromising or losing the Bill. Together with a few friends on the Opposition he had taken up a certain attitude, and from that attitude he did not wish to withdraw; but when he came to the conclusion, after the formation of the "cave party," that he could not get all he wished in this matter, and that there was an opportunity for a compromise being effected if he could induce the members on the Opposition benches to adopt an idea which would be acceptable to the majority of the House, he submitted a proposal to a full meeting of the Opposition. The member for the Williams, who was present, raised his voice in objection, but in the end, when he found that the member for Dundas and several other Opposition members were agreeable to give way in order to get the Bill through, the hon. member agreed to accept the compromise, and then the hon. member (Mr. Piesse) wrote out the schedule as printed in the Bill sent from the Assembly to the Council, in his own handwriting. The hon. member might think he had done a very trivial thing this evening. He (Mr. Pigott) was sorry to say it, because the member for the Williams had been in the House for many years, whereas he (Mr. Pigott) had only been here a comparatively few months, but he (Mr. Pigott) thought it was his duty to his friends to ask the member for the Williams to leave the seat he now occupied.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: In regard to any agreement he might have entered into, he entered into it as any other member would do, believing himself to be at liberty to change his mind if he saw any great necessity. That was the right of every member in the House. When he entered into the agreement with the member for Dundas, that hon. member met him outside the House and

said there was a chance of getting the Katanning district through and the division of electorates he (Mr. Piesse) proposed, if he (Mr. Piesse) would agree to an extra province for the goldfields; and in a laughing sort of way he replied "Oh, well, go ahead." He was not going to see this Bill go through in the form the member for Dundas desired if he thought it was to the detriment of the country. He was of opinion that the Bill in its present form was preferable to the one proposed by the member for Dundas; and rather than jeopardise the Bill, notwithstanding that the leader of the Opposition wished him to leave his seat—in regard to that, he would consider and take his own action—the course he had taken was the best in the circumstances.

MR. THOMAS would not allow the speech just uttered to pass unchallenged. There were two men with whom he was going to deal in this connection. One was Mr. F. H. Piesse, whom he knew and liked outside the House, and the other was the Hon. F. H. Piesse, who sat in this House as member for the Williams, and with whom he would now deal in his political capacity. In doing so, he gave an unqualified denial to the statement just made by the hon. member. He would tell the Committee exactly what did occur; and having made a statement on the point in this House the day after it did occur, his memory concerning it should be reliable. He had then told this House that he would accept the compromise proposed by the leader of the Opposition as one with which all members ought to be satisfied; and if it were not accepted in another place, it would then be our duty to fight for another seat for the goldfields in the Lower House. Those members who were concerned in that compact made it in caucus; and at first he found that he had in a way alienated the support of some of his own friends on this side of the House, because he had fought against them on the night previous. Those members then sat down and threshed out the matter. The question of the Katanning seat did, in a way, come into the discussion; but first the members present had entered into a compact that the agricultural members on this side of the House would consent to the taking away of one of the three provinces for the Upper House, and that

it should be given to the goldfields. That was agreed to by those present, before the question of the Katanning seat was mentioned in caucus. The member for the Williams asked him: What about the Lower House, and what about his (Mr. Thomas's) support of the proposal of a seat for Katanning? He (Mr. Thomas) said that the hon. member having now entered into a compact on the other question, he would do all he could to secure a seat for Katanning in the Lower House. The terms of that compact were written out by the member for the Williams himself, in caucus meeting, and the schedule as it was ultimately sent from this House to the Upper House was in the hand-writing of the hon. member.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: That was not denied.

MR. THOMAS: These were the facts, and he would leave it to other members who were concerned in that compact to say whether his statement was correct. The leader of the Opposition and the other members on these benches remained loyal to that compact, but the member for the Williams did not. Such a compact should be the most binding for a politician to enter into; and he (Mr. Thomas) would rather have anything attributed to him than that it should be said he deliberately broke a compact. No man could accuse him, as he now accused the member for the Williams, of having deliberately broken a compact entered into by him.

THE CHAIRMAN: Enough latitude had been allowed for explanations. He must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question.

MR. THOMAS: We found that when the schedule was under discussion in the Upper House, the whole of the agricultural members there voted on every occasion against the additional province for the goldfields. The member for Hannans this evening had stated that the eight provinces as originally proposed in the Bill by the Government were more equitable as far as the goldfields were concerned than the ten provinces proposed later by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member should look at the schedules which were now printed and available to members, showing that in the Bill as introduced agriculture had nine provinces and the mining interest had

six provinces. The amended Bill as it left this House gave nine provinces to agricultural districts and nine to goldfields. How, then, could the hon. member reconcile his statement that the Bill as introduced was more equitable than the Bill as amended by this House? The Bill as amended by the Council gave double representation for agriculture as compared with the goldfields, and to this he would not consent. In the Bill as sent to the Upper House the three provinces for the goldfields were separate and distinct. Now the Premier asked us to accept the Council's amendment, which gave only two provinces to the goldfields, and both these were dominated by the vote of the Golden Mile. This was not as it should be.

MR. NANSON: Whilst not intending to support the Government in agreeing to the first schedule of the Bill as amended by another place, he was absolutely out of sympathy with the attack made upon the member for the Williams for having changed his mind in regard to the schedule. In politics it was almost essential at times to change one's mind, and perhaps it required more courage to be loyal to convictions than to be loyal to one's leader. The quarrel that members on these cross-benches had with the Government was that when there was a chance of getting a good redistribution scheme the Government did so little. It might be that in the long run we should be compelled to give way to the Upper House as to this schedule; but he would ask whether the time had yet come to hoist the white flag? The result regarding the first schedule was arrived at in this House only after a lengthy debate, and yet the Premier now asked members to go back on their opinion. It was only with very great difficulty that the schedule was brought into its present form. It was only by using arts possibly that did not come to the surface in debate, but had time to flourish more in the lobbies, that what at one time was a majority was changed into a minority, and it was due to those members in another place who made a hard fight for a more equitable system of representation in that place that we should not haul down the flag and put up the white feather, with the first threat of difference of opinion and of throwing the Bill out. Experience



of conflicts between two Chambers should teach us it was only by showing to another place that rather than give way we were prepared to go to the country and allow the electors of the State to be the jury in the dispute between the two Chambers; it was only by adopting that resolute attitude in any great constitutional struggle any great measure of reform had been achieved. Did anyone suppose that the constitution was going to be liberalised if at the very first opposition of another place we gave way instead of standing fast to the principles we espoused?

**THE PREMIER:** How did this liberalise the constitution?

**MR. NANSON:** The schedule did not liberalise the constitution at all. As we had it now it made the constitution as conservative as at present, and when we regarded the temper of the country outside it was more conservative. We had a schedule which, even on the most moderate estimate, gave nine seats to the agricultural constituencies as against six for the mining.

**THE PREMIER:** That was not his estimate.

**MR. NANSON:** It had been stated that there were 12 representing agriculture, but he (Mr. Nanson) left out three as being composite. As there must be a fight sooner or later, and as it would be a fight not in Parliament, but the country, the sooner the Government recognised the inevitable and placed the issue plainly before the country the more chance we should have of securing an adequate measure of reform. Who could say that any great injury would be done to the cause of reform if this Bill did not pass during the present session? There would be a certain amount of delay if we placed ourselves in opposition to the conservative section in another place, but if we went to the country to get the country to vote in our favour against that conservative section, did not members think we should command a larger amount of sympathy from the electors, and that ultimately we should secure a very much larger measure of reform than we should by having this Bill in its present form? Supposing, however, that the new representation to be given to this Chamber was all that Chamber could desire. [**THE PREMIER:** It was.] There

was a change on the part of the hon. gentleman which he supposed happened to most of us when we got into office. The hon. gentleman certainly was not the ardent reformer that he used to be.

**THE PREMIER:** Not the irresponsible reformer he was a few years ago.

**MR. NANSON:** Assuming that so far as this Chamber was concerned the Redistribution of Seats Bill was the most perfect measure, what chance had we in this lower Chamber of achieving any measure of reform if it lay with the other Chamber to remain precisely as conservative as it was now?

**THE PREMIER:** Lower the franchise.

**MR. NANSON:** One credited the other Chamber with a fair degree of astuteness and common sense, and they knew that if the Premier showed no fight on this question he was far less likely to show any effective fight on the question of the franchise. He (Mr. Nanson) would be the last to urge extreme measures if he saw that no good would come from them; and if he could get a reasonable compromise there would be a good deal to be said for giving way, but he did not think we should give way regarding this schedule until we had some sort of assurance that if we did so the Upper House would be prepared to meet us on the important point of the franchise. He doubted whether if the Government were to show fight, with the strong majority at their back, the Upper House would go so far as to lead itself into conflict not only with this Chamber but the State as a whole. Even in political matters, as well as in others, there was a good deal of what was called "bluff," and we had yet to find that there was not bluff in this matter. As long as the Government were prepared to give way on every occasion—and they had never shown any fight yet in regard to these Bills when opposition came from outside the Chamber—we had very little chance of securing one point. Before a division was taken on this question the Premier should at least enlighten us as to whether there was any prospect of carrying the point as to lowering the franchise of the Upper Chamber.

**THE PREMIER:** was sorry the hon. member was so dense. The point was emphasised when it was explained that these two Bills were made perfectly independent; and that was sufficient to

indicate that he (the Premier) by no means agreed to some of the amendments put forward in the Constitution Bill. He believed that if a man went to fight another individual it was as well to have all the friends he could get. If we were going to fight the Council, though he did not believe in fights with the Council, it was as well to have as strong an Assembly as we could get. Under this Bill all we were quarrelling about was a question affecting the provinces of the Council. He desired to get this Bill through so far as it affected the Lower House, because it was from the Lower House we would derive our strength to carry on any contest to secure reform in another Chamber. Even if we were going to liberalise the Legislative Council we must do so by means of a reduction of franchise, and not by means of a readjustment that depended on geographical areas. He hoped the member for the Murchison would support the endeavour to obtain a reduction of franchise for the Council, and he trusted the hon. member would not miss the substance in grasping at the shadow. He also hoped that the Bill would be passed, and that we would give to the new Assembly a greater power than it had at present, by removing the existing equalities and so putting us in a better position, if the need should arise, to carry on a contest in the immediate future.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Now the air seemed to have been a little calmed he desired to speak on a matter which had been touched upon before. It was probably unfortunate that he was not such a diplomat as some members, but it seemed to him that there should be a little more genuineness in politics. Probably he was one who endeavoured to go straight. He could have abstained from voting, as he knew this amendment would be carried by the Government; but he told the leader of the Opposition that he intended to vote with the Government because he thought that any agreement entered into was only to get the Bill through on a past occasion. As the Bill was returned from the Council with amendments he had at first advocated, he believed he was taking the course he had adopted all through. Although the leader of the Opposition and the member for Dundas made certain references to

him in this connection, what he did he did fearlessly, with full responsibility on his own shoulders, and he felt that although certain condemnatory remarks had been made in regard to him to-night, he was in a better position to sit on the Opposition side than certain other members who would be glad to see the Bill carried, but who were afraid to vote as he was going to do.

MR. PIGOTT hoped that this matter would now end; but the member for the Williams was not quite fair. The Bill was in danger of being lost. When the Bill was before the House previously a provision was made for another seat for the district represented by the hon. member, and in entering into a compact the hon. member was seeking for a provision in his own interests. Had the hon. member not entered into that compact with Opposition members, the Bill would never have gone through; but the Opposition party abided by the terms of the compact and the Bill was saved. Now it came back from another place, and all were surprised to see that not only had the Council agreed to the extra seat in the lower House for the hon. member, but another province was also provided for him. The hon. member, by his weak diplomacy, had gained in each House. As he (Mr. Pigott) had said before, there was something beyond all these gains which was dearer to him than anything he might gain for his constituents, and that was his honour.

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

|      |     |     |     |    |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 18 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 17 |

Majority for ... .. 1

| AYES.                | NOES.                |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Burges           | Mr. Atkins           |
| Mr. Diamond          | Mr. Bath             |
| Mr. Ewing            | Mr. Butcher          |
| Mr. Ferguson         | Mr. Connor           |
| Mr. Gardiner         | Mr. English          |
| Mr. Gordon           | Mr. Hastie           |
| Mr. Gregory          | Mr. Johnson          |
| Mr. Hayward          | Mr. Moran            |
| Mr. Holmes           | Mr. Nanson           |
| Mr. Hopkins          | Mr. Oats             |
| Mr. James            | Mr. Pigott           |
| Mr. McDonald         | Mr. Reid             |
| Mr. Piesse           | Mr. Taylor           |
| Mr. Quinlan          | Mr. Thomas           |
| Mr. Rason            | Mr. Wallace          |
| Mr. Throssell        | Mr. Yelverton        |
| Mr. Walter           | Mr. Jacoby (Teller). |
| Mr. Higham (Teller). |                      |

Question thus passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

Amendments 6 to 9:

THE PREMIER: These were consequential amendments, and he moved that they be agreed to.

MR. THOMAS: Some of the goldfields provinces were among these amendments.

THE PREMIER: The first point of contention would arise on No. 12. If the hon. member desired to re-group the districts in the goldfields provinces, progress would be reported after the consequential amendments were agreed to.

MR. MORAN: There was room for another fight on this matter.

MR. JOHNSON: No; it was agreed by the leader of the Opposition to have the fight on the first amendment.

MR. MORAN was not satisfied they were all formal amendments.

THE PREMIER: They all depended on the last vote.

MR. MORAN regretted that the leader of the Opposition should have made such an arrangement.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The absence of the leader of the Opposition from the Chamber indicated that an arrangement was made.

THE PREMIER: Members were perfectly free to discuss the grouping of the goldfields districts if we agreed to these formal amendments. The vote taken should be decisive.

MR. MORAN: Did these amendments all come within the question of an extra goldfields province?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

Question passed, the consequential amendments agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eighteen minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th December, 1903.

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|--|------|
| Return ordered: Lands Purchase Act, operation                          | 2892 |
| Bills: Roads Act Amendment, postponed                                  | 2892 |
| Mining, third reading  | 2893 |
| Roads and Streets Closure, in Committee resumed, reported              | 2893 |
| Jandakot Railway, Recommendation, reported                             | 2894 |
| Early Closing Act Amendment, Message from the Governor, amendment made | 2897 |
| Colliery-Narrogin Railway, in Committee, reported                      | 2898 |
| Factories, in Committee resumed, Clauses 26 to end, reported           | 2899 |
| Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage, first reading                  | 2907 |

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### RETURN—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT, OPERATION.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South East) moved:—

That a return be laid on the table of the House showing—1, The number of estates offered to the Government under the Lands Purchase Act, giving acreage of same, and price originally asked by vendors. 2, The estates purchased, and prices paid for same.

The figures would doubtless justify the existence of a lands purchase board.

Question put and passed.

#### ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### POSTPONEMENT.

Order read for the third reading of the Bill.

HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister) moved that the Bill be read a third time.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT moved as an amendment that the order be postponed till Monday next.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: If the Bill passed in its present form it would disfranchise most of the ratepayers in the country roads boards districts. Owing to the rating system recently adopted, many boards could not collect their rates within the time stipulated in the Bill. In the district he represented some of the rates were not due until December, and according to the measure the rates had to be paid before November to allow ratepayers to vote.

Amendment passed, and the third reading postponed.