

the close of the session. I repeat that if the powers asked for by the Government under this Bill are given, they will be exercised fairly but rigidly. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell debate adjourned.

### BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 5.52 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 2nd November, 1916.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Railways: Western Australian Government Railways, receipts and expenditure for quarter ended 30th September, 1916, and reports in accordance with Clauses 54 and 83 of the Government Railways Act, 1904, for the quarter ended 30th September, 1916.

By the Attorney General: Report of the Royal Commission on the employment of alien enemies in mines.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws regulating motor and other traffic.

By the Minister for Lands: Plan showing land proposed to be granted by license under the Kingia Grass Tree Concession Bill.

### QUESTION — ROTTNEST ISLAND, WORK FOR RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Honorary Minister: 1, How many returned soldiers have been employed at Rottnest Island in accordance with the promise given by the Government? 2, On what work have they been engaged?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Four (4) returned soldiers have been employed. 2, General developmental work and renovations.

### BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1. Flinders Bay-Margaret River Railway.
2. Training Concerns.
3. Stamp Act Amendment.
4. Fire Brigades.

### BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

#### *Third Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND INDUSTRIES (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.42] in moving the third reading said: During the discussion on this Bill last night I promised that a select committee would be appointed to inquire into certain matters referred to in the measure. There is no need to discuss the question further this afternoon. If the inquiry justifies it, the matter can be dealt with in another place and the Bill can be returned to this Chamber. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a third time.*

Question put and passed.

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

## SELECT COMMITTEE, WHEAT MARKETING BILL.

### *Wheat for flour commitments.*

The Standing Orders having been suspended,

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister—Perth) [4.50]: I move—

*That a select committee be appointed to inquire into an arrangement made between the Minister for Lands and certain flour millers by which wheat for flour commitments was acquired by the said millers; such committee to consist of Messrs. Collier, Smith, Cunningham, Hudson, and the mover.*

Question passed.

## BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (STIRLING ESTATE).

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to grant lease:

Mr. ANGWIN: At this stage we should take care that the lease should not be used for the purpose of trafficking. The other day we passed a similar Bill in connection with the Lake Clifton lime deposits and I want, if possible, to stop the two companies coming together. In the lease before the Committee there is full power, immediately the Bill is passed, for the applicant to come to terms with the promoter of the Lake Clifton Company, and instead of the State having two separate works, it is probable that there will be only one. In my opinion there should be a provision whereby it will be impossible for Mr. Scott, the promoter in this instance, to transfer his rights and interests to the company working the deposits at Lake Clifton. It will be detrimental to the best interests of the State if we cannot bring about a certain amount of competition. It is my intention at a later stage to move a proviso, or a new clause, to the effect that such lease shall not be transferred to any person who has any interest in any other license of a like nature in any other part of the State.

Clause passed.

Clauses 3, 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Power to run traffic on railway:

Mr. MUNSIE: This clause deals with the right of the company to run a railway. I would like the Minister to give us some information as to how those who will have occasion to use this line will be treated by the promoters of the company. We have had a bitter experience where concessions have been granted to companies in the past. These companies have charged exorbitant prices for the commodities of employees engaged at the works. Will the Minister make provision to see that employees, at any rate, are carried at ordinary State rates?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member will look at Clause 10 of the agreement, he will see that the lessee must carry goods and passengers over the railway at freights to be approved by the Minister for Railways, not being less per mile than the freight in force on the Government railways. I think the public will be sufficiently safeguarded by that clause.

Mr. MUNSIE: The paragraph protects the company to an extent but I want the employee protected, and I think we should see that the promoter will not charge more than the rates imposed by the State railways.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One has to be careful how far one goes in the direction referred to by the hon. member. At the present time the Public Works Department are running traffic on the lines under construction, which is rather costly and from which, in some instances, the revenue does not approach to anything near the expenditure. I look at it in this way: that as owing to circumstances beyond control lines have been delayed in being handed over to the Working Railways, the farmers are entitled to be considered, but when one comes to a privately owned railway, it may be that the traffic on the line would not bring in anywhere near the amount which would result by charging the ordinary railway fares. In such cases the Minister on having the matter represented to him would be able to fix the rates so that there might be no loss to the contractor who had to run the trains.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Power to grant dredging license:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have a clause here which I think will meet the wishes of the member for North-East Fremantle. He desired that this company should not act with some other company which might have a similar concession and so create a monopoly. I have consulted the Solicitor General in the matter and he drew up a proviso which I think will meet with the hon. member's wishes. The proviso is as follows and will stand as Subclause 3:

Provided always that the said Henry James Scott and his transferee shall not hold or have any interest in any license of a like nature in any other part of the State except the lease and license granted under this Act.

Mr. Angwin: I think that would meet the case except as regards the first part. This Bill provides for a lease as well as a license.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am quite prepared to add to the proviso that the lessee shall not hold or have any interest in any lease or license of a like nature.

Mr. Angwin: That will meet with my wishes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the same time I am not desirous of hampering or harassing the individuals who might desire to take up work such as this and to whom this House may grant a license of the character provided in the Bill. I think, however, it is a wise provision. I therefore move—

*That the following new subclause be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"Provided always that the said Henry James Scott and his transferee shall not hold or have any interest in any lease or license of a like nature in any other part of the State except the lease and license granted under this Act."*

Mr. ANGWIN: I agree to the amendment. I am not desirous of having this inserted in order to hamper any person but in order to protect the State. There is only room for one cement works in Western Australia and the people who get going first will get the trade. My idea was that there was a possibility of Parliament granting powers

to some person for the purpose of forming a company and that afterwards these powers would be sold to some other company holding a similar license. I want to see as many companies as possible formed, but to avoid a monopoly.

Amendment put and passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Schedule 1:

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I have been comparing the schedule with the schedule in the Bill for the Lake Clifton lease, and I find that there are one or two omissions. If hon. members will peruse the Preamble they will find that the lessee under this proposed schedule will pay a rental of £50 per annum, but that he does not start paying until the lease is granted. It does not say when the lease shall be granted, whereas under the Lake Clifton measure it is provided that immediately Parliament approves of the Bill the rental starts. In dealing with it I pointed out to the proposed lessee that he had control of that land, that while we did not actually grant the lease, the land was held reserved for him, and it was only reasonable that he should pay the recognised rent. I think the amount is £200 for the Lake Clifton lands, but here it is only £50, and I think we should treat both parties alike.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will recognise that this is not an agreement but a lease. This Bill gives the Minister power to grant a lease directly the measure becomes law.

Mr. Underwood: But suppose he does not apply immediately.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This Bill provides for the lease being granted but gives the Minister power to grant it.

Mr. Underwood: When is he to apply for it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has already done so, and directly the Bill is passed the lease is granted and the rent commences.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: He will apply only when he has made arrangements with the Commonwealth Government and fixes up his finances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This

lease is granted to him when I sign it directly the Bill is passed.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It would be unfair to make him do that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I brought the point before the Solicitor General myself. The lessee does not enter into any covenant.

Mr. Underwood: Does he not? He agrees to spend £10,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This document is not signed by the lessee at all, but lays down certain conditions which, if not carried out by the lessee, may involve the forfeiture of the lease.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Clause 3 of this proposed agreement says that the lessee shall within one year from the commencement of the lease do certain things. The object of putting that into the agreement is that the conditions are not normal, and that if these people are going to form a company they have first to get the approval of the Federal Government. Then again not even the various States can get rails for their railways such as would be required for this company, and furthermore there is a difficulty of getting machinery and other things. Under the Lake Clifton agreement it is proposed that the parties concerned shall start doing these things one year after the declaration of peace. They cannot carry out the agreement before and they cannot get British-made machinery during the currency of the war. In the Lake Clifton measure, rent starts from the time Parliament approves, and we should do the same under this Bill. We could fairly say, "We call upon you to pay the nominal rental that is provided because the land is reserved for you; it is yours to all intents and purposes, and you should start paying rent from the time Parliament endorses the proposal." I move an amendment—

*That after the word "stirling" in line 26 of the preamble of the proposed agreement the words "from the date of the passing of the Act" be inserted.*

This amendment, if carried, will place the two agreements on all-fours so far as rent is concerned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no objection to this, but the lessee has received this license and it has been very

carefully considered. The hon. member knows that, so far as we are aware, these people are ready to go on at once. The information we have is that the Federal Treasurer has authorised the flotation of the company, the money is available, and directors have been appointed. They know what they are doing in accepting this lease. At the same time, I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: In the third paragraph it says that the lessee shall, within one year from the commencement of the lease, do certain things. In the Lake Clifton agreement, we have the period fixed as from the declaration of peace. I would prefer that it be altered under this Bill so as to provide that, within two years of the declaration of peace, this money shall be spent. We should have this guarantee.

Mr. Underwood: One year is enough.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: They will have grave difficulty in getting machinery. Without moving any definite amendment, we have no means of guaranteeing that the lease will start at any given time. The Minister can approve of the lease, but once we pass the Bill Parliament has said "You can get your lease." But they have to apply for it before they can get it.

The Minister for Lands: They have already got it subject to the approval of Parliament.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: But under the Bill it is not compulsory in any shape for them to apply for this lease until it suits them. We have no guarantee that the lessee will apply for the lease within a reasonable time. We should take the wording of the other agreement, and say that, within a given time of the declaration of peace, a start shall be made.

Mr. SCADDAN: He can spend the money earlier if he cares to do so. What we want is some limitation fixed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think there is any need to insert the provision suggested by the hon. member, because they tell us they are prepared to go ahead at once. It was thought wiser, with a big concession like this, to go to Parliament and ask for its sanction. The Minister,

instead of granting this right—I refer to my predecessor in office—decided that before reaching finality Parliament should be consulted. As soon as Parliament ratifies this the lease is signed.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister has not. I am afraid, grasped the point. Take the Bill as we find it; it provides that the Government may—in this case I think it may be taken as “shall”—grant to Henry James Scott—only a company promoter—certain things. He is not the person who is going to find the capital. All that the Bill therefore provides is that the Government may grant to Henry James Scott, at any time after this becomes an Act, a special lease for certain purposes. But it does not say that the person in question shall take out the lease as soon as this becomes an Act. In other words, Henry James Scott need not take the lease until it suits his purpose. So long as the Act operates, the Minister could not, under the other Act to which he has referred as affecting the question of powers, grant a similar lease to anyone else. The point is that, so long as Scott is mentioned, no one else can get the lease, while he need not take it until he is willing. The result is that he may not take up the lease for some years. To give him 12 months after the declaration of peace is to afford him fair time in which to find the capital to start operations. The point is that we do not want him to sit down under an Act of Parliament and prevent anyone else from operating who may desire to do so. Will the Minister assert that if Henry James Scott does not take up this lease as soon as this Bill becomes law he will forfeit his claim?

The Minister for Lands: Certainly, he must take it up once the lease is issued.

Mr. SCADDAN: In the first schedule, which is the agreement or lease, no date is provided. All I am asking is that if the Committee grant a monopoly over this area this man shall, as early as we consider reasonable, take action in accordance with the terms of the lease. He could take it up immediately the Bill becomes law, but on the other hand he may not. The Act says the Government “may grant a lease,” but does not add “Henry James Scott shall accept.”

The Minister for Lands: But once a lease is granted, if he does not fulfil the conditions the land becomes forfeitable.

Mr. SCADDAN: But this Act excludes anyone else than Henry James Scott from securing a lease over this area so long as the Act remains in force. There is nothing in the Bill providing for the forfeiture of his concession.

The Attorney General: He has to pay a rental, and if he fails to do that the lease becomes void.

Mr. SCADDAN: You can void a lease, but you cannot void an Act of Parliament; and this Bill gives nobody else any right over that area. If this Bill be passed Scott could sit down under its protection as long as he liked and could hunt Australia for the required money; there is no time limit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I may point out that the Minister already has power to grant this lease under the Land Act, 1898; but in view of the importance of the matter it was decided to bring the question before Parliament. The necessary application has been lodged and all the preliminaries have been carried out. Directly this Act is passed the lease will be issued, and Scott at once becomes liable to pay rent. If he makes default, the land is forfeitable. Similarly, if he does not work the land continuously to the satisfaction of the Minister for the purpose for which it is demised, it is forfeitable.

Mr. Willmott: At the end of six months after forfeiture could the Minister grant a new lease of the same area to say John Smith?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think any Minister would do that; he would come before Parliament again. We have a similar position to that in regard to another Bill I have<sup>2</sup> before the House in which the concessionaires failed and we are bringing the matter again before Parliament.

Mr. Scaddan: Will you give a guarantee that he will take up the lease within six months after the passing of the Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could give a guarantee that the lease will be issued within six hours unless it came to my knowledge there were certain circumstances tending to show the proposed lessees were not

worthy. In such an event I would refer the matter to the Government and probably again to Parliament.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister now says that within six months of the passing of the Bill the lease will be issued. That is the point we want made clear.

The MINISTER for LANDS: It is my intention to issue the lease at once.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: But supposing he does not apply for it?

The MINISTER for LANDS: He has already applied.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Then the Minister makes the statement that the lease will issue within six months.

The MINISTER for LANDS: Certainly; and once the lease is issued the lessee must work the land continuously and within one year must expend on buildings and machinery on the demised land a sum of £10,000 to the satisfaction of the Minister. In the next two years he has to expend another £10,000. When people come forward who are prepared to develop our latent resources, I think we should encourage them and accept their bona fides.

Mr. TAYLOR: I understand that negotiations have reached a certain point, that the application for this lease is in and its issue is pending the passage of this Bill. Does the Minister say that so soon as this Bill becomes law he will issue the lease straight away?

The MINISTER for LANDS: Certainly.

Mr. TAYLOR: Providing the proposed lessee is not anxious to close and wishes for time, how long is the Minister prepared to give him? There is no specified time in the Bill and he can keep hanging on for 12 months if he likes.

The MINISTER for LANDS: No, I can close at once.

Mr. TAYLOR: And you will issue the lease straight away?

The MINISTER for LANDS: Yes.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think we should specify that he must put out a certain quantity per day, as in the case of the Waroona lease. I would suggest that 25 tons per day should be the quantity. If the Waroona people are bound down to supply 50 tons these men should be asked to supply 25 tons.

The MINISTER for LANDS: These people are obliged under the agreement to expend a large sum of money; the amount is £10,000 in the first year and they will be obliged to spend a similar sum in the next two years; therefore I do not think they are likely to sit idly by and do nothing.

Mr. Willmott: Will they spend that £10,000 in the first year at Capel or in Melville Water?

The MINISTER for LANDS: They certainly cannot spend it in Melville Water.

Schedule as amended put and passed.

Second and third schedules—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL. — PERMANENT RESERVES (No. 2).

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [5.50]: I have only a few remarks to offer on this Bill. The Minister in moving the second reading told the House that the Government desired to excise portion of class A reserve in the locality known as the Margaret River country for the purpose of allowing a portion of that area to be used by any one who desired to erect dwellings as holiday resorts. I have not seen any plan showing just where the locality is and I think the House should know exactly where the land is, how far it is from the Margaret River caves, and just what it is intended to do. Is it proposed to part with the fee simple of this land or to let it on lease, and if so on what terms and conditions? Will the Minister also tell us whether there has been a demand from any person or persons for this land for the purpose he has indicated or is it just an idea of the Government that the land should be thrown open on the off chance of someone coming along and applying for a portion of it. I am quite sure that the House will be jealous to part with any portion of a class A reserve unless very sound reasons can be given by the Government. I should say that the Government ought not to bring this proposition before Parlia-

ment unless they have good reasons for doing so, that is to say, unless many persons have indicated that it is their intention to take up this country and not only take it up but to settle upon it and erect dwellings there. If the Government are simply going to cut out a portion of this reserve and throw it open to the public, whether the public intend to settle there or not, then I would strongly object to such a course, because as soon as the speculator saw the opportunity of getting hold of blocks contiguous to a public health resort we would find the speculator on the doorstep waiting for his opportunity to come in, and even if some bona fide purchaser did desire a block on which to build a residence the speculator would get there before him. The Minister did not tell the House, so far as I can remember, whether applications had been received for any portion of this land and on what terms or conditions it was intended to dispose of the land. Is it proposed to lay it down as a condition that any person or persons getting possession of a portion of this reserve will be compelled to utilise it in some way? I shall be glad if the Minister will satisfy hon. members on this point. We should not part with any portion of class A reserves unless sound reasons are given for doing so.

The Minister for Railways: The Minister gave his reasons when he moved the second reading.

Mr. CARPENTER: If the Minister assures the House that the reasons are good I shall not have any opposition to offer to the Bill.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [5.58]: I would like to inform the hon. member who has just spoken that a very large area, in fact the whole of that portion of the coast, was set apart a long time ago as a reserve for caves. The whole of that land does not contain caves, and the portion that it is now proposed to excise from the reserve is on the banks of the Margaret River. This area is eminently suited for orchards and small selections, and numerous inquiries have been made from time to time by people who are anxious to build summer residences there, and many also who want to put in their declining days in

that locality. This reserve was made very much larger than there was any occasion to do. It was reserved solely because it was thought that caves were to be found all over it, but it is now known that there are no caves in the particular area which it is intended to excise. This country is eminently suitable for cutting up into selections as suggested by the Minister, and I therefore hope that nothing will be done to obstruct the passage of the Bill, because I regard the measure as a just one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore—in reply) [6.1]: I am sorry that the member for Fremantle was not in the House when I moved the second reading of this measure, and when I explained the purposes of it, namely, the excising of portions of this reserve for the purpose of cutting it up and disposing of it for residential blocks, some of which can be cultivated and used for orchard purposes. It is a very interesting locality, and the area that it is proposed to excise contains no caves at all. It is within a short distance of the coast. It is really a rugged coast with high cliffs, and I understand that good fishing is to be obtained there, and that altogether it is an ideal spot. Officers of the Lands Department have recognised this, and have recommended that this land shall be excised in order that it may be set apart for the purposes now proposed. I am pleased to know that the member for Nelson is satisfied with the Bill, and that he is according it his support.

Mr. Carpenter: Are you going to give the land speculator a chance to get in and secure it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think this will be taken up by land speculators. It has not yet been decided how the land will be granted. I will endeavour, however, to see that the land speculator is cut out of it as far as is possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title:

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: While I have no objection to the Bill, I quite recognise that

the reserve covers a very large tract of country and that it is possible that a fair amount of it could be used to far better purpose than simply keeping it a reserve and limiting it, I understand, to the grazing of stock. I think that various applications have been made to the Committee controlling this reserve for the right to graze stock on it, and I think that, from this source, a certain amount of revenue was raised, but even while that was so, we must recognise that by sub-division and closer settlement, it would be made to produce considerably more than at present.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is making a second reading speech on a short title.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I am leading up to the point which I wish to emphasise. I desired to get an assurance from the Minister that the proposed sub-division of this particular portion of land has not merely been requested by people who desire to obtain it, but that it has been recommended by officers.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can ask this question on another clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Portions of reserves A8431 and A8694 excised:

Mr. ANGWIN: From what I gathered from the Minister's remarks in introducing this Bill, this is a very valuable area of land and unequalled in quality by anything in any other part of the State. He pointed out that this area is suitable for residences. With the splendid caves which there are in the district, it is quite possible that in a few years' time this land will be fairly valuable to the State. In this clause, I find that this land may be disposed of under, and subject to, the provisions of the Land Act, 1898, but I think it is unwise that the State should lose the freehold of this land. I consider that it would be wrong for us to dispose of land which promises to be valuable to the State in the future, and I intend to move an amendment to provide that after the word "of," in line 4, the words "by lease" be inserted. The clause will then read—"All that piece or parcel of land described in the schedule hereto is hereby excised from reserves A8431 and A8694, and such land shall no longer be dedicated to the

purposes for which the reserves were made and may be disposed of by lease under and subject to the provisions of the Land Act, 1898. I propose, subsequently, to move that the term should not exceed 99 years. I feel that it is in the interests of the State that we should hold these beauty spots. There is no doubt that under the Bill, if passed as at present proposed, some wealthy men will take advantage of the provisions and secure this land for building summer residences, hotels, etc.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. ANGWIN: I am not sure whether the Land Act of 1898 gives power to the Minister to grant any lengthy period, but I do know that there have been some amendments to the 1898 Act which empower the Minister to grant a lease for as long a period as necessary. Seeing that the value of the land has been put forward by the Minister, it may be that it should be retained to the State. I therefore move an amendment—

*That in line 4, after the word "of," the words "by lease" be inserted.*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I urge the Minister to accept the amendment because of the special circumstances of the case. This is a valuable national park around which there are caves, and it is one of the most beautiful pleasure resorts in Western Australia. We ought to guard against any possibility of this area being alienated in large blocks.

Mr. Underwood: Why get rid of it in large blocks?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am not in favour of alienating it at all. It is a very dangerous thing to interfere with our national parks. If it is intended that alienation should take place, I urge that the rights of occupancy that are granted should be on the leasehold principle in this particular case.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am unable to agree to the amendment. The object of excising this portion of the reserve is to use it for residential purposes, and as a place where people can perhaps plant small orchards. If people desire to do so they should be allowed to take up the freehold of the land. It is not magnificent land, for the only really good land is along the



fringe of the river, and it only extends to five or ten chains on either side of the river. There is no risk of the land being taken up by one individual. Areas suitable for settlement can be arranged. It is not intended that one person should have the monopoly of the whole area. Probably it will be made conditional that persons who want to take up the land can do so either on the leasehold or the freehold principle, but there is little doubt that the latter principle will be the one adopted. We do not want to bind people down to the one principle or the other.

Mr. COLLIER: We should do well not to divert this land at all from the purpose for which it was originally reserved. We are too prone to part with land of this description which has been reserved practically for the use of future generations in this State. It is not as if the population is too large for the amount of land available in this State. It is ridiculous to scour through a country remote from settlement as this place certainly is, in order to pick out little patches here and there and make them available for settlement.

The Minister for Railways: Why?

Mr. COLLIER: Because, if all we have been saying about the possibilities and resources of this State in regard to settlement is correct, there are hundreds of square miles of land as yet unoccupied, nearer to railways, richer and more suitable, which can be made available to the people. Here we have a district which has been described by the Minister for Lands as possessed of some fine scenic beauties, within the caves district and close to the Margaret River. The mistake in the past has been that Western Australia has not looked sufficiently far ahead but has built for the time being. This land is situated in what is regarded as one of the finest holiday resorts of the State. I ask what is the need to interfere with this reserve? It certainly is not for lack of land suitable for settlement. If there is the urgent need for this land to be made available for settlement, which the Minister for Industries wishes us to believe, then there has been a good deal of misrepresentation regarding the value of the land in the South-West. Our trouble for years has been that we have not been able to get settlers for

land which is already available. Yet this Bill would imply that land suitable for orchards is not available except by cutting it out of this reserve. I assert, there is room for thousands of settlers on land between Perth and this district if all we have been told is correct, and I have no doubt it is, as to the value of the land in the South-West. Then, why take people so far away from a market and from the centres of population where the cost of getting produce to market is so much greater? For years we have heard the cry as to the necessity for developing the South-West so as to avoid spending the thousands of pounds we send away yearly for dairy produce. We shall not get very far in that direction if we have to make a start in the most remote portion of the South-West.

Mr. Scaddan: Has there been any request for the Bill?

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. Scaddan: For what purpose?

The Minister for Railways: Residential and orchard purposes.

Mr. COLLIER: Have we not orchard land available by thousands of acres nearer to Perth? It is the duty of Parliament to maintain our reserves.

The Minister for Works: Do you believe that once a reserve always a reserve?

Mr. COLLIER: I do not believe in sticking hard and fast to anything if there is good reason for departing from it; but there are no reasons existing in this case. While I would prefer to have the amendment carried, if the Bill is to go through I should like to see the clause deleted.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: This land will be used largely by people who own land some distance away in other parts of the South-West, at Bridgetown, and elsewhere. Those people make a practice of going to the caves each year on a holiday, and if residential lots are made available here, people will go there the more willingly. It has been suggested there is abundant land nearer to Perth, but I will ask the member for Boulder whether at Hamel or Harvey or any other station between Perth and Bunbury there is any land suitable for holiday purposes. When this reserve was declared it was done in anticipation of further caves being discovered.

But new caves are expensive to the country. Every member who has had experience in control of the Treasury know that every additional cave opened means extra expense. With reference to the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle, he is willing enough that the land should be taken out of this reserve so long as it is disposed of under leasehold.

Mr. Angwin: I have not said so.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Freehold tenure is my policy and I think it should be the policy of members on the Opposition side after their experience of the other system in connection with the workers' homes.

Mr. Angwin: It worked well, too.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Members opposite know well that the homes built on freehold land have been better looked after and given better results than those erected under the leasehold system. The member for North-East Fremantle himself knows that the leasehold houses are not looked after.

Mr. Angwin: I know they are.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He knows also that in respect of land that cost the Government £20 it has been leased to the applicant for a workers' home on a basis of £60.

Mr. Angwin: That is not true.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I say it is true, and there are members in this House who can prove that it is true.

Mr. Scaddan: Is the present Ministry continuing this system?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: So far as I am concerned it will not continue. I told the Premier that he should not charge 3 per cent. on anything more than the amount which the land cost the Government.

Mr. Scaddan: Have you rectified it?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We will rectify it if you give us time, and we will give those people their freehold.

Mr. Scaddan: But you have not done it yet.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Members of the opposition will have an opportunity of discussing that matter when the Bill comes down. If the leasehold system

worked so badly under those who know it and who believe in it, how can we expect any better results from it in the near future? I hope that the Bill will become law and that when this land is sold people will have the right of obtaining the freehold. There is more than a sentimental preference for freehold, a man usually prefers to have the freehold of his land and I believe a majority of members in this House are in favour of a freehold tenure. No harm will result to the reserve, but justice will be done to a considerable section of the people desirous of spending their holidays on the cool western coast of this State. Why do hon. members opposite object to the excision of this small area?

Mr. Taylor: There is plenty of land available, apart from this.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is the answer I wanted. I say, this is just the land that the people who know the country want—river frontage.

Mr. Underwood: It is picking the eyes out of the country.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There are plenty of river frontages in this State. Apart from the people now desirous of applying for allotments in this area, there are very few people wanting river frontages.

Mr. Scaddan: A year or two ago everybody, people and Press, were boasting about the reservation of this land.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The land will be put to good use if the settlers who go to that coast for their holidays are allowed to obtain small holdings. A good many people have already secured land at Augusta for this very purpose.

Mr. Scaddan: For an entirely different purpose.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member's own Government set aside land for this very purpose at Augusta, where, moreover, there is a river.

Mr. Scaddan: We did not grant river frontages at Augusta, although there are miles of river frontage there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What is good at Augusta is good at Margaret River and elsewhere. Why drive the people to the Eastern States for their holidays? Apparently the leader of the Opposi-

tion desires to close all our coast lands against the people of the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I shall support the amendment, and after the amendment has been disposed of I shall endeavour to have the clause deleted. In this matter I agree entirely with the member for Boulder (Mr. Collier). Millions of acres are available for cutting up into small allotments in that part of the country, without attacking this little reserve. One of the greatest mistakes in the history of Western Australia was the failure to make sufficient reservations of land. One result of that error is to be seen here in Perth, the Government offices being scattered all over the City. On the question of freehold as against leasehold, the Minister for Railways has talked drivell, for there are no better kept or more highly improved properties in the State than the pastoralists' leaseholds, the tenure of which lasts only until 1928, without right of renewal. Capitalists are prepared to spend millions on the development of pastoral leaseholds. Yet the Minister for Railways says, "People will not improve leaseholds." All over Western Australia, and indeed all over Australia, we are short of river frontages. They have been parted with almost everywhere. I hope the Minister for Lands will view this matter as a West Australian, and preserve our river frontages. To surrender them is a crime against future generations.

Mr. SMITH: I move—

*That progress be reported.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	17

Majority for .. 4

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Harrison	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Male
Mr. Lefroy	

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Mullany	

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; progress reported.

### BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.20]: With the permission of the House I would like to make a further statement on the subject of this Bill and give members additional information. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) took exception to the last line of the statistical returns which I previously supplied to the House, and which read "The 1913 Bill provided for only three seats for present four North-West districts." He asked me to look into the matter and to make a statement of the facts. The facts are that the 1913 Bill, as introduced, did provide that the four North-West districts be reduced to three, but an amendment was introduced providing for the reduction of three seats only. The present Bill provides for four seats. The statement, therefore, appearing in subdivision 4 of the Statistical Returns is accurate in that it refers to the Bill as introduced. I have some supplementary statistical returns to furnish to hon. members. It will be remembered that when I moved the second reading of the Bill I supplied the House with a certain set of statistical returns which were based on the electoral returns I had to the 31st July. I now have the electoral returns to the 24th October.

Mr. Scaddan: I have before me the Bill which was introduced in the third session of the eighth Parliament, 1913, a Bill for an Act to make provision for the better representation of the people of Western Australia in Parliament, and it provides for four electorates to remain as at present. I am reading from the Journal of the House.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Look at the page preceding that.

Mr. Scaddan: I am dealing with the preceding page.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think I showed you, Mr. Speaker, the Bill with the clauses in it. Probably what the leader of the Opposition is looking at is one of the amendments. Hon. members have now before them a copy of the supplementary statistical returns, which give the calculations based on the enrolments as on the 24th October. That is as near as we can get to the approximate number of districts to which each area, as defined in the proposed Bill would be entitled. Hon. members will see that the metropolitan area, during the period, has increased from 70,838 to 71,054, whilst the agricultural-mining districts have decreased from 81,904 to 76,980. I thought it was only right when I discovered that to give the information to hon members.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: That is the change between March and July?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The figures I first gave were the enrolments on the July rolls. In the meantime there has been a State canvass.

Mr. Scaddan: No.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The returns were issued for July and later for October.

Mr. Scaddan: The rolls were made up on that census before we left office.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was a further canvass going on owing to the changes taking place. This corrected information has been supplied by the Chief Electoral Officer, and I thought it only right that the House should have it, as well as any other information that I may become possessed of. I desire to point out the differences and how they arose. Whilst the metropolitan area has increased in the enrolments, those of the agricultural-mining area have decreased. The second part of the return contains the whole of the constituencies set out into the areas as defined in the Bill, and it gives the number of electors enrolled on 24th October in each of those constituencies. Speaking of the first set of figures on the top of the page, I wish to say that they are based on the enrolments on the 24th October, and they are given irre-

spective of the powers contained in the Bill to amend the boundaries of the areas. Clause 7 provides for an alteration by the Commissioners of the boundaries of any of the areas. The figures are irrespective of that. They are likewise free from the power given to the Commissioners in Clause 6 to take into consideration what is known as community of interests, physical features, means of communication, and existing boundaries, and they are also to be judged subject to the power of the Commissioners to add to or take away up to 20 per cent. These figures are no indication of what the findings of the Commission may be. They are merely the enrolments of to-day cut into sections under the quotas as provided in the Bill. In the other returns no allowance is made for the 20 per cent. difference.

Mr. Scaddan: Your 20 per cent. margin operates within the district.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: True, but the Commission has full power, not only in regard to the boundaries of the districts but the boundaries of the areas. For instance, if it were found by the Commission that the figures of to-day would give too large a representation to the metropolitan area, it would be within the power of the Commission to excise a portion of the metropolitan area and add it to a country area, and in that way decrease the number of electors in the metropolitan area. They will have the power to do that, in addition to regulating the 20 per cent. difference above or below.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [8.28]: The Attorney General's second attempt to explain the Bill has not made the position very much clearer.

The Attorney General: I have not made a second attempt; I have only given you additional information.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It was a second attempt because the Minister undoubtedly covered ground he went over in his previous utterance. Disregarding the later statement by the Minister, I want to say in regard to this measure that we must recognise, in a huge country like Western Australia, where we are only at the developing stage and where our population changes as our industries develop, that every now and again a Redistribution of Seats Bill is necessary.

This applies particularly in a new country like Western Australia. I am not prepared to admit, however, that the change in population, or the development in any particular portion of the State is a special inducement, incentive, or necessity for the introduction of this Bill. This Bill, in my opinion, is introduced because of an expression of public opinion in regard to the interference in electoral boundaries which took place in 1910. A Redistribution of Seats Bill is the more necessary because of that gerrymandering Bill which we had in 1910, certainly more so than because of the changes in population. Therefore I say that in all countries there is a time when a Redistribution of Seats Bill becomes necessary. I say definitely and distinctly, however, that this is not the time for the introduction of a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Just now the different electorates are changing to a great extent, not because of any permanent change in the residences of our electors, but because of the period of war through which we are passing. The figures which the Minister gave us just now are evidence of the sudden changes which have taken place, and whilst these are taking place we should never attempt to redistribute the seats. We find that in the metropolitan area there has, during the last few months, been an enormous increase in population, seeing that there has really been a decrease in our population, or at all events no particular increase. Despite the low internal difference in the number of electors there has been a big change, comparatively speaking, during the last few months in the metropolitan area. That proves my contention that a change is taking place to-day, not because of any change in residences, or any permanent change, but because there is a general influx into the metropolitan area owing to the number of enlistments from the country and the mining districts. The figures are evidence that in the mining areas there has been a decrease, whilst there has been an increase in the metropolitan areas. We find sudden changes taking place under abnormal conditions, and during abnormal times we should never attempt to redistribute the electors of any country. Apart from the fact that I do not think this is the time for the introduction of a Bill of this description, the Bill in itself

is not truly a Redistribution of Seats Bill. It is a Redistribution of Seats Bill for certain areas but not for the whole of the State.

The Attorney General: It is not a Redistribution of Seats Bill at all.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It has not provided for it.

The Attorney General: That comes later.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It is only the title which conveys that, but the Bill, as drafted, prevents the Commissioners from doing anything in the nature of a redistribution of seats. It is a Bill which really outlines the method by which the seats shall be redistributed, and then the matter is submitted to the Commissioners for confirmation. The Commissioners have not got the scope to do the work because of the hampering nature of the Bill which is now under consideration. For instance, the Minister, who tried to justify his Bill by so doing, drew some comparisons with the Bill as introduced by the previous Government in 1913. If we are aiming at getting the principle established that the people shall have an honest opportunity of determining the districts for which they shall return members of Parliament, then there is no comparison between this Bill and that of 1913. The 1913 Bill did give the Commissioners ample scope and opportunity without any interference from political influence to redistribute seats so that the electors might have an opportunity within reasonable limits of returning men to electorates in proportion to the people living in any particular electorate. The Minister has attempted to explain the mistake which was made, as far as the figures were redistributed, outlining what was proposed in the previous Bill. He went so far as to say that no one really knew what the Bill meant, and then set to work in his own way to analyse the Bill so that we might know what we failed to realise in 1913 when the Bill was under discussion.

The Attorney General: Read the debates in this House in 1913 and you will see that not a soul analysed the Bill.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not prepared to take the analysis of the Attorney General as being correct as applied to the Bill of 1913. For instance, the Bill of 1913, as is attempted in this Bill, gave special consideration to the North and North-west portions of the State. That was done because

of the peculiar geographical position of these electorates, but the Minister is wrong when he states that that Bill proposed to cut down the four States to three. It did not propose anything of the sort.

The Attorney General: Of course it did.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill as adopted by the Government and passed through this Chamber provided that the truly North and North-west seats, three in number, should have three representatives as they have at the present time, but that the fourth seat, which is called a portion of the North-West, was to be included in the remaining 47 seats, and the Bill left it optional, or within the powers of the Commissioners to so arrange the boundaries as to bring those of the Gascoyne electorate down to include a portion of the Murchison electorate. That was done for the express reason that, as generally recognised now, there is more community of interest between the Gascoyne and the Murchison than between the Gascoyne and Roebourne. We find that quite a number of the pastoralists in the Gascoyne electorate, as it now stands, have large interests in the Murchison, and consequently these pastoralists and men who are interested in the Gascoyne portion are also interested almost to the same extent in the Murchison; with the result that there has been a growing change of recent years so pronounced that it became essential that we should realise that there was more in common, and more community of interests, between the Gascoyne and the Murchison than between the Gascoyne and Roebourne. Realising the change which has taken place in recent years, in the 1913 Bill, as passed by this Chamber, it was provided that the three particularly Northern and North-West constituencies should still retain their representation, but that the Gascoyne boundaries might be so changed as to place a portion of the Murchison district within the Gascoyne electorate. It is true this Bill aims at retaining the four electorates in the North as they are at present constituted. I question the wisdom of that for the reason that I have already advanced. The main difference between the two proposals is that while the 1913 Bill provided for three seats in the North and North-West, the other 47 seats remaining were left to be divided up

amongst the other electorates of the State. In this particular Bill, instead of leaving only one special area, namely the north of this country, they created three other special areas and then set to work to allot the 46 seats into other special areas, or in other words instead of having one seat as proposed in the 1913 Bill, and dividing the rest throughout the remaining portion of the State, it is proposed to make four seats up there and divide the other 46 seats between other areas specially created under this Bill. Therefore, I say it is a Redistribution of Seats Bill within defined areas but not within all the areas of the State. These areas form a peculiar feature of this Bill, and one is at an absolute loss to fathom the reason why they were created. There is no precedent for a Redistribution of seats on a basis of this description, and one cannot understand what influences were behind the Government in their attempt at a redistribution on this basis. It appears to me that the Ministers have got together and said there should be 14 seats in the metropolitan area, so many in the central mining areas, and so many in the agricultural mining areas, whatever that may be, and that then they immediately afterwards arrived at some arbitrary figure allotting the seats, and subsequently instructed the Parliamentary draughtsman to frame the Bill and fit it in with that particular allotment. To prove that there is some justification for a statement of that description, we have only to look at their proposal to reduce the number of enrolments in the metropolitan area by two-fifths. Why two-fifths? Where does it come in, and what justification is there, or precedent, for doing this?

The Attorney General: The two-fifths brings the metropolitan area on to the same basis as the country mining; take two from five and three remains.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: That proves my contention that the Government arrived at the number of seats they were going to allot, and, in order to fit that in, decided to reduce the enrolments of the metropolitan area by two-fifths. There is no principle in a redistribution of that description. There is no more justification for adopting this two-fifths reduction than there is for adopting the one-fourth reduction in the

central mining. In order to get the quotas that the Government desire to allot to these special areas which are created they say that the metropolitan area enrolments shall be reduced by two-fifths, and the central mining, Kalgoorlie and Boulder, shall be reduced by one-quarter, whilst the other areas, known as the agricultural mining, shall be left intact. Why should Cue be left intact and Kalgoorlie reduced by one-quarter? What justification is there for arriving at a figure of that description or for making a redistribution of seats on such a basis? I do not expect the Attorney General to give his reasons now, but when he replies. Another peculiar feature of this Bill is that in arriving at the boundaries of the areas as they are called, community of interest is totally disregarded as well as means of communication; and these having been totally disregarded so far as areas are concerned, the Commissioners are told that they must give due consideration to community of interest—that is, they are told this after it has been made impossible for them to give due consideration to those factors so far as the areas are concerned. This is put in the Bill merely as so much padding. The Commissioners cannot give community of interest or distance from the capital due consideration for the reason that the areas are defined and the seats are allotted in the Bill itself.

The Premier: You are putting a wrong construction on the Bill; you cannot read.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): No seats are allotted in the Bill at all.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not putting a wrong construction on it. I ask what community of interest there is in agricultural-mining? How can you have community of interests when you combine agriculture with mining, and how can you talk of means of communication when you couple up Northam and Cue?

Mr. Scaddan: That is done in order to cut Westonia out of Avon, that is all.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: There is absolutely no community of interest between agriculture and mining. The only fair and equitable combination would be agriculture with ports. You might then have the agricultural

industry combined with ports serving that interest; but there is absolutely nothing in common between the agricultural and the mining industries. That coupling demonstrates to what extent the Minister has gone in order to endeavour to fit in the distribution with a prearranged scheme. Take Mount Margaret and Swan. Swan is within a stone-throw of this House, and yet it is in the same area as Mt. Margaret. Is there any justice in such a proposal?

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister) interjected.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not forgetting anything. I realise that this Bill proposes distinctly that the local mining area shall include Swan, which is almost at the door of Parliament House, and also Mount Margaret and Cue, which are so far away.

The Premier: They are all in Western Australia.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I know they are in Western Australia, but why did you not agree to the proposal contained in the 1913 Bill giving to the Commissioners the right of dividing up the State amongst the 46 seats so that we might have a fair distribution?

The Attorney General: They can do it under this Bill.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: Why do you say to the Commissioners you shall do so much in a given area, in other words give special consideration to special areas. The 1913 Bill provided special consideration for the North-West which is the only portion of the State deserving of special consideration owing to its geographical position. This Bill proposes that the mining representation shall be reduced by four, two of the four seats being given to the metropolitan area and the remaining two to the agricultural districts, that is agricultural-mining.

Member: Where does the Bill say that?

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister has outlined it in the Statistical Returns. That would be the effect of the decision of the Commissioners, because as I say the Bill is so framed that the Commissioners cannot do other than as proposed by the Minister, who fixed the areas and allotted the figures to each area.

Mr. Foley: He has bound them in every way.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: It is a remarkable thing that this aspect is emphasised in the Statistical Return where it says, "If you total the agricultural and metropolitan districts you get so much, and if you total the mining and agricultural you get so much." Why this special pleading, why try to justify what the Minister knows is a peculiar method of arriving at a redistribution? There should be no directions to the Commissioners other than were placed in the Bill of 1913, namely that the number of electors in the State should be allotted between the 46 or 47 seats, with one-fifth up or one-fifth down. You would thus give them absolute scope to deal with questions such as community of interest, distance from the capital, etc., without tying them hand and foot as proposed in this Bill. The position is something like the special clause we were discussing last night in connection with the Liquor Bill. That was cleverly worded in order to get out of an awkward position, and this Bill has been cleverly drafted to fit in with a prearranged plan. That being so, one has to read it carefully in order to realise what the House will be doing if we pass it. I went carefully through the statistical return, and I found the figures, so far as they concerned the 1913 Bill, to be so incorrect as to the actual position that I questioned very much whether the other figures were worth following up. The Minister has evidently gone very carefully into the figures and from his statement to-day I have no doubt those who follow me in this discussion will be able to rectify the figures and discuss the matter on a correct basis as outlined by the Minister to-day. In connection with the Minister's contention that the Commissioners have power to increase or reduce by one-fifth throughout the whole of the districts, I question that very much, as the Bill is framed. I have read the Bill very carefully two or three times and I do not know yet whether we can safely say that that provision applies only to the Northern seats or to the whole of the Bill. We should make that point very clear so that the Commissioners may understand it is intended they should make the alteration so far as the

distribution is concerned within the far areas. I do not wish them to think that is to apply to the whole State, but only to the special areas which have been created. It is possibly as well at this stage to make oneself perfectly clear. I am not arguing that we can be fair to all the interests and industries in the State by attempting to have a Parliament elected on a purely population basis. That I think is agreed by all parties. All parties have agreed we should make a special feature of the North-West—that is an evidence of their sincerity in that regard. But even so far as the other portions of the State are concerned, owing to the long distances and the scattered nature of the population, I do not argue that we should attempt to have this House elected on a purely population basis. While I am not arguing that, I do wish the Commissioners to be instructed in such a way that they shall take into consideration what Parliament desired should be taken into consideration. In the Bill of 1913 we outlined all those special considerations to which the Commissioners were to pay attention when arriving at their conclusions. We pointed out that the main feature in Western Australia in connection with a redistribution Bill is to take into consideration means of communication and distance from the seat of Government. This latter applies particularly to the North-West, but it applies also in a limited sense to other portions of this State—the Murchison, Meekatharra, Cue and other areas deserve more consideration than the metropolitan area, where the seat of Government is established. We therefore outlined that the Commissioners in arriving at their decision were to take into consideration means of communication and distance from the capital. Then we outlined the different features of community of interests. If we give the Commissioners free scope to adjust the boundaries by dividing up the remaining portions of the State between the 46 or 47 seats, allowing them to increase or decrease by one-fifth, and give them special features they have to take into consideration, we may expect an honest redistribution framed by Commissioners free from political influence or political control. The Bill of 1913 was based on precedent, on what has been done in Queensland and given



general satisfaction. The Queensland principle has been adopted by the Commonwealth and has given satisfaction there also. The 1913 Bill, therefore, was drawn on a basis which had been already established in Australia and had been working in Australia with satisfaction. But the proposal we now have is unique. So far as one can gather it is not a distribution of the State at all, allowing for limitations. So far as I can gather, there is no precedent whatever for a proposition of this description. It is one of those things which the present Government have attempted to introduce for the purpose of arriving at a given position, which position they had in their minds before ever they started on redistribution. Their object was to maintain their majority, so that they could permanently keep the Labour party out of office. It is unfair of them to submit a Bill of that description to Parliament, and it would be distinctly unfair to the electors if Parliament passed such a Bill. The previous gerrymandering Bill did not have the effect desired.

The Attorney General: Does the hon. member refer to this as a gerrymandering Bill?

Opposition Members: Yes.

The Attorney General: Let the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) be a man, and answer.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The previous gerrymandering Bill—

The Attorney General: Does the hon. member refer to this as a gerrymandering Bill?

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: The previous gerrymandering Bill, I say, did not have the desired effect; and if the Attorney General is attempting to achieve the same result by this Bill he will fail as miserably as his predecessors failed.

The Attorney General: If the hon. member refers to this Bill as a gerrymandering Bill, then I say he is no man.

Mr. Scaddan: The Attorney General is like a bantam calling a hen no rooster.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON: I think I have said sufficient to show that the Bill as framed does not give the commissioners an opportunity of doing the work that Parliament would expect them to do. Above everything else, the Bill is not one which should be introduced at the present time. Conditions in this State are not normal, and therefore the

time is not opportune for attempting a redistribution of seats. As regard the figures submitted by the Attorney General to-night, I am strongly of the opinion that if those figures were closely investigated it would be found that the increase in the metropolitan area is due largely to the transfer, by men who have enlisted, of their wives and families to the metropolitan area. Unquestionably, in my own constituency a large number of such families have taken up residence, more particularly at Midland Junction and Guildford. They are families of men who have enlisted from the agricultural, the mining, and the timber areas. The Forrest electorate, for instance, is at the present time practically depleted. The saw mills have been closed down, and a large percentage of the workers have enlisted, though a few have gone to take the places of the handful of Austrians interned from the Kurrawang wood line. A redistribution of seats to-day would involve the cutting out of the Forrest electorate. There are not enough people in it to justify a special constituency. Yet, under normal conditions, the Forrest electorate had too large a population, having regard to its distance from the seat of government, as compared with the electorates of the metropolitan area. Let us hope the influx of wives and families into the metropolitan constituencies will be merely temporary, since those wives and families are only awaiting the return of the husbands from the front. The proper time to think of a redistribution of seats will not be until normal conditions have returned. So far as I am concerned, I shall oppose this Bill. Apart from my chief objection, that the time is not opportune, the measure itself is drafted in a fashion which convinces me that under it we shall not get the results which the House should look to get. We must see that the electors of Western Australia have a fair opportunity of influencing the return of members to the Assembly. Under this measure, special consideration is given to certain portions of the State, while even fair consideration is denied to other portions. I fully recognise that the representation of the metropolitan area must be limited, but I have no right to assume that we should be justified in reducing the metropolitan enrolment by two-fifths for the purpose of allot-

ing seats on such a heavy reduction. Why not redistribute on the lines of the 1913 Bill, leaving the commissioners to reduce or increase by one-fifth for special reasons, so as to afford the various bodies of electors, according to their respective situations, an equal opportunity to influence elections to Parliament? The redistribution proposed by the Bill is not fair, and the present is not an opportune time for redistribution.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [9.9]: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority for	..			11
				—

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Walker
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)
Mr. Hudson	

#### NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 7th November, 1916.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Health Act, 1911-15: Wagin Municipal Council, adoption of Model By-laws. 2, Roads Act, 1911: Uniform general by-laws for regulating motor and other traffic, adopted by the Corrigin, Dalwallinu, East Avon, Melbourne, Perenjori-Morowa, Queen's Park, and Westonia roads boards.

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Mes-age from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Postponement of Debts Act Continuation Bill.

### QUESTION—FRUIT-CANNING PROJECT. CORRESPONDENCE.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he place on the Table of the House the correspondence between the Agricultural Department and the Associated Fruitgrowers re proposed establishment of fruit-canning works?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: As the Associated Fruitgrowers are at present engaged in delicate negotiations with regard to this matter, it is not considered expedient to lay the correspondence on the Table of the House at the present juncture; but the file can be perused by the honourable member at the Agricultural Department, if he desires to see what has taken place up to the present.