

the Chamber? It was so bad at times that it had an effect on the eyes.

THE PREMIER: There would be a new Chamber next session.

MR. DAGLISH: The light was very trying on the eyes to members sitting on the Labour benches.

MR. JACOBY: The lighting of the Chamber had a very serious effect on his eyes. The lights which were on a level with the eyes were very trying to members. The engineer in charge of the electric appliances might attend to this matter. The electric bells in the House and the electric light in the Opposition room required attention. A complaint had been sent to the Public Works Department but the result was *nil*. During two days of the week the electric bells on the Opposition side of the House would not work at all.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If any complaints had been made on the subject, they had never reached his department or the matter would have been attended to. Now that the hon. member had drawn attention to the subject he (the Minister) would see if anything could be done.

MR. HASSELL: The Assembly Chamber was not the only place that was badly lighted. The Electric Light Company were to blame.

Item passed.

Item—Refreshment Room, £100:

MR. THOMAS: What did the item refer to? The Committee had already passed items of £120 and £600.

THE PREMIER: This amount was for the ordinary upkeep of the refreshment room, such as glasses, cutlery and so forth.

MR. THOMAS: If there were more advocates for economy he would be agreeable to strike the item out. It was to be regretted that those who desired economy were so small in number. The Labour party who cried out for reform did not carry their request into practice, which proved conclusively to the country that the Labour representatives were opposed to economy in every shape or form, although they preached it throughout the country on every possible occasion. He did trust that the Labour party would be found voting for economy and not voting against it.

MR. JACOBY: The amount of this item was for maintenance of furniture, crockery, and other such requisites in connection with the Refreshment Room.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:34 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 4th November, 1902.

	PAGE
Question: Land Settlement, Victoria District ...	1959
Leave of Absence ...	1960
Return ordered: Exhibition Expenses, Paris and London ...	1960
Bills: Public Service Act Amendment, Council's Amendments ...	1960
Police Act Amendment, Recommitment ...	1960
Bread Bill, in Committee, reported ...	1960
Land Act Amendment, in Committee ...	1966
Constitution Act Amendment (Redistribution), second reading (resumed) passed ...	1978

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **MINISTER FOR MINES:** Papers connected with Gold-mining Lease No. 222m, asked for by Mr. Holman.

By the **TREASURER:** Returns under Life Assurance Companies Act.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, VICTORIA DISTRICT.

MR. HIGHAM (for Mr. Hutchinson) asked the Premier: 1, Whether the Government is aware that there is a large quantity of first-class land, suitable for close settlement purposes, held in fee simple by pastoralists and others in the Victoria District. 2, Whether, in the interests of land settlement, the Govern-

ment will endeavour to open up negotiations with the owners with a view to the purchase of portions of these estates under the Lands Purchase Act, provided the prices asked be reasonable.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not the practice of the Government to approach the owners of property with a view to purchase; but it will be glad to consider any offers that may be made.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by **MR. FIGOTT**, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to the member for East Kimberley (**Mr. F. Connor**), on the ground of urgent private business.

RETURN--EXHIBITION EXPENSES, PARIS AND GLASGOW.

On motion by **DR. O'CONNOR**, ordered: That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing--1, The length of time the following gentlemen--**Hon. H. W. Venn**, **Messrs. Aytoun**, **Grainger**, **Holroyd**, and **Trowton**, have been employed by the Government or Exhibition Committees in connection with the Paris and Glasgow Exhibitions in Europe or Western Australia since. 2, An account setting forth--(a.) The rate of salary paid to each of these gentlemen; (b.) details of expenses charged by, paid, or allowed to each of them respectively; (c.) the total amount paid or allowed to each of them (1.) for salaries, (2.) expenses, (3.) bonuses in connection with such exhibitions in Europe or since. 4. Whether any of them were in receipt of their ordinary salary from the Government in addition. If so, who and what amount.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of two farther amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Assembly's amendment of Clause 5, now considered, in Committee.

No. 1, Subclause (1.) paragraph (a.)—Strike out the word "twenty," and insert "fourteen."

No. 2, Subclause (1.) paragraph (b.)—Strike out the word "ten," and insert "seven."

THE PREMIER: By paragraph (a.) of Subclause 1, as it left the Assembly,

the Government might grant to any officer of 20 years' service leave for six months on full pay or 12 months on half pay, and by paragraph (b.) to any officer of ten years' service three months on full pay or six on half pay. The Council altered "twenty" to "fourteen" and "ten" to "seven." He moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Question passed, and the amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the **PREMIER**, Bill recommitted for amendment.

THE PREMIER: In accordance with the promise given the member for Subiaco (**Mr. Daglish**), he moved that the following subclause be added to Clause 12:—

Any lecture, address, or discussion on science, ethics, social duties, literature, or art, or on any matter of public interest, shall not be deemed a public entertainment or amusement within the meaning of this section.

This amendment was advisable, since there was no desire to interfere with full discussion on the matters indicated in it, the object of the clause being merely to check improper entertainments.

Amendment passed.

MR. FIGOTT said he desired to insert in the Bill a clause on lines similar to that dealing with gold-stealing, in order to check pearl-stealing in the North West.

THE PREMIER: That provision might be introduced in the Upper House.

Bill reported with a farther amendment.

BREAD BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (**Hon. W. Kingsmill**) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that after the definition of "household wheaten bread" the following definition of "fancy bread" be inserted:—

"Fancy bread" means twists, collars, and pipe loaves under 2lbs. in weight."

Amendment passed.

MR. HIGHAM moved as an amendment on the amendment that after "collars" the words "scone loaves" be inserted. Scone loaves were large, flat, light loaves which owing to the treatment in baking could with difficulty be maintained at strictly the same weight as ordinary batch loaves, and they were supplied to a class of customers not very particular whether a loaf was an ounce or half an ounce under weight.

MR. TAYLOR: The words "damper and johnnycake" should also be inserted, in order that the Bill might deal with all sorts of bread.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection to the amendment moved; but the words mentioned by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) were not trade terms, and therefore their inclusion was inadvisable.

Amendment on amendment passed.

MR. JACOBY moved that the following be added to the clause:—

"Standard brown bread" means bread made from the whole pure products of wheat.

This definition was highly desirable. Brown bread to the general public was bread made out of whole-meal wheat, whereas what was sold as brown bread was usually only a mixture of ordinary dough and bran. He was informed that there was no difficulty in making whole-meal bread as required by this amendment. It could hardly be said that the amendment would protect the public against a fraud, but it would insure their getting brown bread when they asked for brown bread. Any bread not made in accordance with this definition would have to be branded as household bread in the usual way.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member might consider whether the definition of household bread did not cover his object. Household bread was bread made from flour which was not dressed to the same degree of fineness as standard wheaten flour, which weighed two-thirds of the weight of the wheat it was made from. By Clause 6 the purity of bread was absolutely established. To add bran to ordinary flour was only to reverse a process which had already taken place: the bran had been dressed out of the ordinary flour, and the baker simply put the bran back into it, a perfectly legitimate act.

MR. JACOBY: But the baker did not return the pollard to the flour, and the pollard was the most beneficial portion of wheat.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the Committee thought the amendment would have a good effect, he would accept it; at the same time he thought it unnecessary. The hon. member wished to have another standard of flour established, whereas the standard flour according to the clause weighed two-thirds of the weight of the wheat, except the amount lost in gristing.

MR. JACOBY: Brown bread was a term generally applied by the public to bread made from whole-meal wheat. It might be called also household bread, but it was brown bread. He wished to have a definition of brown bread inserted; there could be as many other definitions as the Committee liked. Brown bread as at present made in the majority of cases was not what the customer wanted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Although brown bread was much more largely eaten in other countries than in Western Australia, and there were Bread Acts in those countries, no provision such as that which the hon. member wished to insert could be found in the Bread Acts of other countries.

MR. JACOBY: That was owing to the condition of the trade in the old country. There was a considerable demand for this class of bread, and great competition went on amongst the makers of this bread. Here the demand was small.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The master bakers had pointed out that there was practically only one class of bread made in this country. The bread which the member for the Swan was talking about would amount to probably only one or two per cent. of the total quantity made. The Government had been accused of going far enough in fancy legislation: this appeared to be fancy legislation. The hon. member wished to thrust down the unwilling throats of the people of Western Australia brown bread.

THE PREMIER: The amendment was an important one, and after all did not affect the people. It was a difficult question affecting the trade, and he would like to know what the views of the trade were on the question. It was all very

well to say we wanted brown bread, and to describe it in the Bill.

MR. JOHNSON: It was bread made from the whole-meal of wheat.

THE PREMIER: There was legislation of this class elsewhere, but there was no special definition of brown bread in that legislation.

MR. JACOBY: There was more fraud with this class of bread than with any other kind.

THE PREMIER: That would have been noticed where Acts of Parliament on the question were in force. But such a definition did not exist in other Acts. If it was difficult to obtain pure brown bread now, it was not likely we should succeed in having it made by inserting a definition in the Bill.

MR. DIAMOND: It would stop imitation brown bread being made.

THE PREMIER: When a person bought imitation brown bread, knowing that it was imitation, no damage was done. If the Committee thought good would be done the amendment might be inserted, but it was not well to try experiments. This provision did not exist elsewhere.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In London particularly there was an immense sale, by the aerated bread companies, of what was known as brown bread. It was produced from the whole product of the wheat. What people were desirous of getting was bread from the whole product of wheat as it was made in London by the aerated bread companies. Bakers to-day, to save themselves the trouble of getting whole meal, kept a bag of bran and mixed a certain quantity of bran with dough, calling it brown bread. The member for the Swan did not wish to prevent the baker doing what was done now, but he wished to see the real brown bread made. Scientists held that whole wheat was absolutely the most wholesome thing to live on. Lots of people wanted to get whole-meal bread, but were unable to do so. He suggested that the Colonial Secretary should accept the amendment.

MR. TAYLOR: From what the member for the Swan said, there was no flour or meal prepared in the State from which brown bread could be made. [Mr. JACOBY: Oh, yes.] As long as people were not compelled to eat the whole-meal bread he had no objection to the clause.

He had eaten brown bread, but he could not say he was passionately fond of it.

MR. DIAMOND: It was to be hoped the amendment would be accepted. Every person who wanted brown bread and asked for it expected to get whole wheat meal bread. Whole wheaten meal cost less than the silken dressed flour; therefore he could not understand why the bakers did not make a special batch of whole-meal bread, which would cost them less than the white bread to make. People to a certain extent were being defrauded by the present system. This clause might cause one or two bakers to make the proper whole-meal bread.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection to the clause; still it would be wise if the hon. member allowed it to appear on the Notice Paper, and moved the amendment on recommitment. There would be no objection to recommitting the Bill for that purpose.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that in line 1 of Subclause (b.), in the definition of standard wheaten bread, the words "at least" be struck out. Standard flour weighed two-thirds the weight of wheat from which it was made. A bushel of wheat weighed 60 pounds; from that bushel the yield of flour was 40 pounds, pollard 11 pounds, bran seven pounds, and two pounds were lost in gristing. It was not wise to have words in the definition which showed a varying quantity.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—Bread to be marked:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that in line 1, after "rolls," the words "and fancy bread" be inserted.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—Bread to be sold in loaves of fixed weight:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that after the word "rolls," in line 1, "or fancy bread" be inserted.

MR. ATKINS: Did that mean that fancy bread was not to be weighed?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Fancy bread was not sold by weight. It was, he understood, sold at special prices, and a special process was needed for the preparation of this fancy bread. It would be an injustice to the bakers if

these loaves, which, as he had said, entailed a certain amount of trouble, and took up a great deal more space in the oven while being baked, were under the same rules and regulations as ordinary bread. What was proposed existed in the Bread Acts of the sister States and in England.

MR. ATKINS: There was a good deal of swindling about that, because there was only one kind of bread sold by weight. For instance, it was said that tinned loaves and that sort of thing were not bread to be weighed, and unless a person bought just that one sort of loaf he got short weight. We ought to guard against that.

MR. HIGHAM: This fancy bread was not more than five per cent. of the total quantity of bread sold. [MEMBER: Tinned loaves?] Tinned loaves were not exempted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: All bread except twists, collars, pipe loaves, and scone loaves, was sold by weight.

Amendment passed.

MR. DIAMOND: Bakers in a seaport generally made large loaves to the order of shipmasters. This clause said that bread should not be sold, or offered for sale, except in loaves of one, two, or four pounds weight. Loaves were made in Fremantle weighing 6, 8, 10, and 12 pounds, to order. It would be hardly fair to prevent the bakers from taking these orders from shipmasters. These big loaves took up less room in stowing away, and they also kept longer. If the ship were going to sea those on board had fresh bread so much longer by having these large loaves. He moved that the words "unless specially ordered in writing by the purchaser" be added to the clause.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 6—No bread to be sold if made of impure flour:

MR. HIGHAM moved that after the word "yeast," in line 5, "sugar and malt extract" be added. These two ingredients were necessary.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 7, 8,—agreed to.

Clause 9—Every person selling bread to carry scales:

MR. DIAMOND said he did not know whether he was in order, but he proposed to introduce an amendment when the Bill was recommitted, that the bread should be weighed in the bakery before it was sent out for sale. Bread purchased from a baker wholesale might be lying in a shop window in hot weather for a couple of days, and no matter how honestly the bread might have been made it must lose weight. He thought that if the bread was properly manipulated in the bakery, and weighed before it was sent out and sold, the public would be protected. He understood that the general custom was to put 2lbs. 3ozs. of dough to make a 2lb. loaf. The large bakers put 2lb. 4ozs.

MEMBER: They always weighed in the bakehouse.

Clause passed.

Clause 10—No unsound flour to be sold:

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The clause contained the words: "Provided that this subsection shall not apply to any ingredient or article used for cleansing or preserving the corn or grain from any smut disease or insect." These words should be eliminated, because the provision really pointed to the fact that one could use grain which had been bluestoned for the prevention of smut. There was no necessity for this, because no miller who had any reputation would think of using that, and this clause was really giving him the right to use it. To preserve corn from any smut disease, bluestone was only used before sowing. If it was proposed to recommit the Bill, this clause should be remodelled or that portion be struck out. He moved that the proviso be struck out.

MR. HIGHAM: Might not such a clause be necessary for treating weevils?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Lime was used, but it was only sprinkled about the warehouses. Anyone who knew anything about it knew that it would not be put into milling wheat.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 11 and 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Where bread weighed, six loaves to be tested:

MR. HIGHAM moved as an amendment that the word "six," in line 2, be struck out, and "12" inserted. It was

only justice to the baker that a fair number of loaves should be taken.

MR. JACOBY: There might not be 12 loaves.

MR. HIGHAM: If there were not 12, all there were would be taken.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY opposed the amendment. Six loaves were specified to protect the baker. Had the desire been to make the Act stringent, a man might be fined for having one loaf of short weight; and the master bakers, though suggesting 12, had agreed not to press for an alteration.

Amendment negatived, and the clause passed.

Clauses 14, 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—No baking on Sunday:

MR. HIGHAM moved that the words "except by permission of the inspector, in writing" be inserted after "Sunday," in line 2. In seaports provision for Sunday baking was indispensable, seeing that steamers sometimes arrived and departed on that day. Sunday baking was also necessary when the Monday was a public holiday.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Permission was given to set the "sponge."

MR. HIGHAM: That was a brief process. The clause would prevent working the dough and making the bread. There was no desire to encourage Sunday baking; and the necessity for the inspector's permission would be a sufficient safeguard.

MR. JACOBY: Better strike out the clause.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

MR. JACOBY moved that the clause be struck out. Not at seaports only but in the country would the clause prove impossible; for without Sunday baking residents must often be deprived of bread for two or three days.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY hoped the clause would be retained. All difficulties would be met by giving bakers permission to work on part of the Sunday night, starting say at 7 o'clock, thus prohibiting them from working between midnight on Saturday and that hour on Sunday, giving the day for recreation. By representatives of the trade he had been assured this would meet the requirements both of town and country.

MR. JOHNSON opposed the amendment of the clause, which had been

inserted in the interests of the employees. What need was there to start baking early on Sundays? He was opposed to Sunday work, and objected to deputations from Perth residents waiting on the Colonial Secretary and claiming to represent the State, whereas they knew nothing of the matter save the requirements of their own shops.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: At all times he was the unwilling victim of any deputation which cared to see him, and he might be interviewed by employees as well as employers.

MR. JOHNSON: The former were satisfied with the Bill; yet the Minister now sought without notice to amend it.

MR. BATH supported the clause as it stood. After hearing some members, one would suppose there was no occupation in which Sunday labour could be dispensed with. This argument came well from members who enjoyed their Sunday's rest. The bakers' employees pointed out it was unnecessary to bake bread on Sundays, all requirements being met by having a man to make the dough.

MR. HAYWARD: In ports Sunday baking was on occasions necessary, and the inspector's discretionary power would prevent abuse. Steamers arriving needed bread, which, if not in stock, must be baked immediately.

MR. TAYLOR: The clause read "make or bake." "Making" he understood to be kneading the dough, the actual baking being a small matter, while the kneading was hard work. If the making were not allowed till midnight on Sunday, the bakers would be for 24 hours outside the bakehouse; and whether that would inflict hardship on the community must be considered. In his electorate were numerous master bakers not employing journeymen; and such men if kept compulsorily idle from midnight on Saturday to midnight on Sunday would be seriously harassed; for if the "sponge" were set at midnight on Sunday, when would the bread be delivered? This would need to be done some hours before 12 o'clock. [MR. HIGHAM: According to the weather.] Yes. Unfortunately, we could not control the weather. The conditions of seaport towns of course differed from those of inland towns. Steamers, for example, did not care to take stale bread.

MR. JOHNSON: Sponge was usually set at 8 or 9 o'clock on Sunday evening, work could be begun on the dough at half-past 12, and baking might start at half-past 4 or 5 next morning. On no night was the sponge set earlier than 8 o'clock, nor was work on the dough begun until about 12 o'clock; therefore why should not the same arrangement hold on Sunday? The clause would inflict no hardship, and he hoped it would pass without amendment.

MR. JACOBY: The Colonial Secretary stated that this clause had been inserted at the request or with the concurrence of the master bakers of Perth.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; that the suggestion he made was concurred in by the master bakers.

MR. JACOBY: As a matter of fact, the master bakers considered this clause unworkable. It might answer in the case of a baker employing only one delivery cart, but in large establishments Sunday work was indispensable. To enforce the clause would require an army of policemen and inspectors; and we should not pass laws which there would be every temptation to break. Either the provision should be restricted to municipalities, or it should be struck out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The suggestion already made by him offered the best way out of the difficulty. Experts had assured him that the convenience of all parties would thus be met. There had been no outcry against the conditions of Sunday work in the past, and plenty of bakers, he understood, went to work without demur at 7 o'clock on Sunday evening.

MR. TAYLOR: Competition in the labour market explained that.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Possibly; but the men had not to work any longer hours in consequence of beginning at 7. If they worked from 7 o'clock on Sunday evening onward, they escaped work at a later time. The acceptance of his suggestion would allow of the men keeping as much of the Sunday as possible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Fremantle proviso was better than the Minister's suggestion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: To accept that proviso was merely to shift the responsibility.

MR. JOHNSON: No baker went to work at 7 o'clock in the evening on week days, and why should he do it on Sundays? Kneading the dough did not start before 12 o'clock.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: According to the information he had, that statement was not correct.

MR. JACOBY: In Perth, work must be started at 7 o'clock in the evening.

MR. JOHNSON: Then the conditions here were different from those which prevailed in Kalgoorlie. If a journeyman baker commenced work at 7 o'clock on Sunday evening, at what hour would he finish on Monday morning? The men did not leave the bakehouse before 8 o'clock in the morning; and thus their beginning work at 7 o'clock in the evening would mean that they were actually engaged for 13 hours, whereas in fact their average working time was only 9 or 8 hours. No baker began delivering bread at 3 o'clock in the morning, and therefore it was evident that work was not begun at 7 o'clock in the evening.

MR. JACOBY: A baker might bake three or four batches of bread.

MR. JOHNSON: Then three or four lots of men would be engaged on the dough.

MR. JACOBY: But supposing the baker had only one oven?

MR. JOHNSON: Large bakers, such as Brown and Burns, of Subiaco, had several ovens.

MR. TAYLOR: Like the hon. member (Mr. Johnson), he desired to protect the employee, but he had yet to learn that professional bakers did any other work than knead dough and bake.

MR. JOHNSON: Who cleaned the bakehouse, then?

MR. TAYLOR: An assistant, called an "offsider." If the employer himself or the head baker desired to begin work in the bakehouse in the evening, there should not be any great objection raised. Other men employed in the bakehouse, however, ought to have the whole Sunday for rest.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The operative bakers had a union which afforded its members ample protection. There was also the Conciliation and Arbitration Court which was always open for the union to appeal to. There was no need for operative bakers having any more protection than other trades had.

He wished to alter the clause because if carried out as it stood the public of Western Australia would be inconvenienced.

MR. DIAMOND: It was a mistake to insert the clause in the Bill. There were other means of settling the hours of labour between the employers and the employees. If the employees and employers could not settle their differences then the Arbitration and Conciliation Court could be appealed to. The main object of the Bill was to see that the public got pure bread and full weight. The clause was indefinite: it would be better to strike it out. The employees did not ask for the alteration of the clause, and there did not seem to be any strong request by the employers.

MR. HUGHAM: In all bakehouses of any size the operative bakers finished by noon on Saturday. There was no objection on the part of the operative bakers to the clause as it stood. It did not alter present conditions. The union had proved to be a strong and vigorous one, and the bakers had been able to maintain all conditions in the past.

MR. HASTIE: It was to be hoped the Committee would pass the clause as it stood, for then less work would be done on Sunday.

MR. HASSELL: The clause would press heavily on operative bakers. He would support the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that in line 1, after "shall," the words "before seven o'clock, p.m.," be inserted.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	11

Majority for ... 7

AYES.

Mr. Butcher
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. James
Mr. Kingmill
Mr. McWilliams
Mr. Monger
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Rason
Sir J. G. Lee Steere
Mr. Higham (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Bath
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Oats
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Reid
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Taylor (Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It would now be necessary to alter the latter portion of the clause, which provided that employees could go to work to set and superintend the sponge before seven o'clock in the evening.

THE PREMIER: It was necessary to set the sponge two hours earlier so as to prepare for making the bread.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was only in large bakehouses that it was necessary for the employees to start kneading the bread at seven o'clock. To enable that to be done, the setting and superintending of the sponge would have to be done before the employees could go to work. The setting and superintending of the sponge was no labour at all.

MR. BATH: The amendment which had been inserted was unnecessary, as proved by the Minister's remarks. In a baking establishment it was unnecessary for a man to go to work to make the bread until after the sponge had been set. The amendment which had been carried provided the earliest hour at which a man should go into a bakehouse.

MR. JOHNSON: The intention of the Colonial Secretary was evidently that the sponge should be prepared so that the men could go to work at 7 o'clock. If he had known the true intention of the amendment, it would not have gone through so easily. He would make inquiries, and move to recommit the Bill for the purpose of farther discussion.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 17—Council of a municipality may appoint inspectors:

HON. F. H. PIESSE: What was going to be the authority?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Inspectors might be appointed by any local board of health.

Clause passed.

Clauses 18 to 23, inclusive—agreed to.
Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Debate resumed from 16th October the **PREMIER** in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 11, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 12—The fee simple of certain residential lots may be granted:

MR. PIGOTT moved that the clause be struck out.

THE PREMIER: For what reason?

MR. PIGOTT: The reasons were pretty well given during the debate on the second reading. Though he did not wish that any injustice should be done to even a few persons who would be affected by this clause, we should be taking too much upon ourselves in passing the clause as it stood. When these people took up the residential areas, they did so without hope of ever getting a freehold title. It was some time afterwards that an agitation was got up for the fee simple to be given to the leaseholders. That agitation was not got up by the people on those leases. A member interjected "land-jobbers." An Act was passed with a section providing that the Crown should not give up the right to these lands. He was glad the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) was present. That hon. member knew all the particulars, and would be able to give good reasons for knocking this clause out. There might be one, perhaps a few, parties on leases in this area who might be entitled to some mercy, he would say, on account of the telegram that was sent by the Under Secretary for Lands; but the bulk of the men were not on the leases when the Land Act Amendment Act was passed. So much was it the fact that it would not be fair to give these men the fee simple, that he knew of cases where people had obtained ownership within the last five or six months at very nominal sums. He believed that in one case the leasehold was sold for £17, the buildings on the lease being worth at least that amount. If this clause were passed as it stood, the man who bought that lease only a few months ago would have a great advantage over any men who held similar residential areas in other parts of the country.

HON. G. THROSSELL asked the Committee to remember the object of the Government of which he formed part in relation to blocks of land. It was said that the poor working man should be considered. It was found that there was no order, no system, and he was liable at any time to be turned off. The Government recognised that it was a very proper principle that the labourer should be placed as near as possible to his daily

work. As it was, these labourers were settled on leases, and they had no sanitary control; so after much consideration it was decided to secure to the wage-earner the right of selecting a quarter of an acre for a home. At that time it was said we were not only not looking after the wives and families of these men, but that we forced the working men to compete in the open market with the capitalist. In order to avoid that reproach, which he (Mr. Throssell) thought was a very reasonable one, he advocated the principle of land being allowed to working men. The pages of *Hansard* would show this was not a novel idea, and that 10 years ago he advocated the principle of land being allowed to working men. After much consideration land was purchased, and there were quarter-acre selections for working men, who could go to the Lands Office just the same as the oldest selector and select a quarter of an acre block. It was the glory of our land laws at the present time that the great difference between our land laws and the land laws of other States was that here if the poorest man had his application in first, his privilege could not be taken away from him. That principle was extended to the working man wherever the Government had land. The Minister for Lands had covertly sneered at the distinction made between the miner and the capitalistic selector; but wherever the Government had land, such 10-acre sections had been subdivided for the wage-earner instead of being sliced up by the speculator. For instance, at Fremantle, when a canvas town sprang up on Government land, he (Mr. Throssell) was urged to turn off the residents; but he sent a surveyor to divide the land into quarter-acre sections, and scores of men became selectors under the Land Act, and were there to-day, while similar provision was made at Claremont, York, Albany, Collie, and wherever there was any Government land to set aside for such purpose, it being recognised that men who could not purchase land on coming to the country should have the right to these quarter-acre sections. Hence these blocks were laid out on the goldfields; and it was common knowledge that the Government were urged a thousand times by men of influence to acquire leases so that these

might be given to the "poor working man"; and he (Mr. Throssell) then foretold, as *Hansard* would show, that this would be very well so long as the blocks were of small value, but that as the value increased so would the holder's temptation to sell. From working men's representatives he had received pages of quotations from Henry George on land nationalisation, and congratulations on giving effect in some degree to the principle; but he (Mr. Throssell) and others foresaw that when the blocks became worth £300 or £500, and speculators offered such sums for the title deeds, the temptation would be too great for the working man to resist; hence, with the sanction of Sir John Forrest and the Government, an amending Bill had been introduced to prevent any title issuing for such blocks. That the present Premier should bring in such a Bill as this was most surprising; for he, like the late Mr. Leake, was a democrat, and the Bill would be the thin end of the wedge. The evils to be dreaded could occur only where there was great prosperity. From Fremantle one heard no outcry for title deeds; but if the Fremantle free areas became valuable, the local speculator would join hand in hand with the leaseholder to press the Government for a title. A similar attempt made at Collie had been very warmly rejected by Mr. Leake, who, in refusing the title, was consistent with his former utterances. It was stated there were millions sterling embedded in the earth at Collie; consequently, labour would be needed for all time. Then was it not right that the wage-earner should be located as near as possible to his work? That principle the Forrest Government had secured for him; and if he died or wished to remove, the improvements could be sold to one of his fellows, though he could not dispose of the title. But if the Bill were carried, the Premier could hardly resist an application for titles all round. All knew the fascination of ownership, for the crinkling of the title deed was very tempting. It must be remembered there were on the goldfields but three modes of granting land—grants of townsites proper, where the fee simple was obtainable; grants of residential lots, which enabled the holder of a miner's right to secure a block of land in fee simple; and side by side with the

grants carrying title deeds, was this righteous principle that the poorest man in the land, though clad in rags, could, if his application were made soon enough, select a building block from which no man could turn him off. Yet that principle the Bill proposed to abolish. Surely the Premier had too great a sense of justice to play fast and loose with such a principle. The Government were simply playing with someone else. They well knew there was a strong feeling against the Bill, and none would be better pleased than the Premier and his colleagues if, by the amendment, the clause were struck out. Let members help to please the Premier and to save him from himself by supporting the amendment. When Minister for Lands he (Mr. Throssell) had been appealed to by goldfields politicians and municipal councils in combination, on behalf of the poor working man, with protests against the extension of towns, and applications that free leases be kept separate from townships proper. But on inquiry he had found that the land set aside as the poor working men's blocks was worth from £300 to £500 per block. The request was that these be continued as working men's blocks for ever, and the Government listened to the voice of the charmer, though he well knew what would come, and it had come. As to the telegram read early in this debate, he could only say that if he had consented to that telegram he had done a wrong, because the principle was that possession should be secured to the working man for all time, and that there should be no fee simple; and if it could be shown that he had consented, set him aside and regard the principle. The existing Act had been fully discussed and passed by Parliament, and if titles were to be issued for the blocks in question, let Parliament know something about the present value, who were the original owners, and through how many hands the blocks had passed since their subdivision. If he were rightly informed, the blocks had become of great value; therefore better grant the leaseholders a little compensation and retain the principle than pass the Bill and have titles issued for nominal sums. During the debate nothing had been said as to the upset price, though all knew from

experience that the Government would be urged to name a trifling figure, and always in the interest of the poor working man. Presumably these blocks had changed hands five or six times; and it would be interesting to know who manipulated the whole matter, which should be fully investigated. If there was money to be made, the Government ought to make it. The holders of the blocks should be compensated if they had any just claim; but we ought not to play fast and loose with a sound principle which had already commended itself to this House, to the late Premier (Mr. Leake), and to every thoughtful man. Trifling with the principle would mean that similar applications would pour in from all parts of the State. A great privilege which this State offered to the poorest man landing on its soil was the right to take up 160 acres of agricultural land if he were a farmer, or a quarter of an acre for residential purposes if he were an artisan or a labourer. Even the Premier would rejoice if the clause were struck out, and he were so saved from himself. The operation of the residential leases principle was not confined to goldfields; for wherever the Government held land, quarter-acre sections for the working man were to be found, the object being that the poor man should not have to compete at auction with the land speculator. If blame must rest on some one, let it rest on him (Mr. Throssell). While he had not fully investigated the matter, he could not conceive that he had so lightly trifled with a principle for which he had fought during ten years, and which had been dear to his heart ever since he had made land legislation a study. The Government would not, he thought, offer active opposition to the striking out of the clause. They had made a promise, and to keep that promise they had introduced this amendment. The Premier, if he trifled with the principle of residential leases, would put a rod in pickle for himself; he would create for himself endless trouble; he would find himself inundated with requests for similar favours from other parts of the State. To grant title deeds to residential leases would be to wipe out for ever the possibility of the labourer residing close to his work.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member (Mr. Throssell) evidently had not fol-

lowed the debates in connection with this question, because the whole of his speech was entirely beside the point. Not a word had been said against the principle of residential leases, of which he (the Premier) had expressed himself a strong adherent long before the hon. member initiated the present system. In introducing the Bill he had pointed out that this clause was brought forward because of special grounds existing in particular cases, and he had begged members not to vote for the clause unless satisfied that on the merits of the case it was justly to be passed. For that reason he felt somewhat impatient when the hon. member urged in opposition to the clause that the principle of residential leases ought not to be trifled with. He had stated repeatedly that he did not wish to interfere with that principle, which he believed to be good; but above even the principle involved in the residential lease system was the principle that injustice must not be done. If the hon. member believed himself to have done wrong in making a promise, nevertheless it was our duty to see that the promise was kept. We could not exonerate ourselves from responsibility by allowing the hon. member to take that responsibility on his shoulders. Here were leases put up under certain terms and conditions, as alleged by those who took them up. A telegram was read at a sale—

MR. JOHNSON: There was no sale.

THE PREMIER: Well, a telegram was used at a certain time. The point he had put before the House was that any man who took up a residential lease on the terms stated in that telegram was entitled to have those terms carried out.

MR. PROCTOR: The man who took up the lease was not on it now.

THE PREMIER: Where the hon. member got that information, he did not know—

MR. PROCTOR: From the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins).

THE PREMIER: And therefore he would not stop to contradict him, but pass the observation by without farther comment. We were not the tribunal to go into the facts relating to each particular case. All we had to do was to ascertain whether there existed facts in view of which a man might have taken up

a lease, and in view of which injustice might result unless the terms of a certain contract were carried out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was no evidence that any man had taken up a lease under the terms of any contract.

THE PREMIER: That was entirely a question to be determined by the tribunal to be appointed, whether that tribunal consisted of the Minister or any other person or persons. The contention of the Government was not to be met by general observations relative to the residential lease system. If residential leases were put up on the terms that those who took them up would have a right to purchase, should we be justified in taking away by an Act passed 18 months afterwards rights which purported to be given at the time the land was taken up?

MR. JACOBY: Was that right lawfully given?

THE PREMIER: Yes. The law was clear in 1898, when the right was given. If the holders of residential leases had the right prior to the passing of the Act of 1900, we were not justified in passing at a later date legislation of which the effect was to take away the right vested. That was the most important principle, infinitely more important than that of residential leases. Were we to take away by *post facto* legislation rights vested in the holders of leases at the time they took up their leases? Each member must make up his own mind on the question whether as a matter of common justice — and this was the only point for determination — the telegram referred to, if brought under the notice of a man when taking up a lease, would lead that man to think that he had a right to expect that the terms of the telegram would be carried out? Any member who replied "yes" to that question was plainly bound to enable some machinery to be created by which the promise could be carried out. Our plain duty was to see that the legislation of 1900, passed by the House in entire ignorance of the facts of this particular case, should not be used for the purpose of working a gross injustice. In fairness to the Under Secretary for Lands the facts should be laid before the Committee. On the 24th November, 1898,

the Under Secretary minuted the Commissioner for Crown Lands:—

At the request of the Boulder people some small blocks have been laid out as shown in "blue" on the litho. on page 1A hereunder. The Mayor has written, and also interviewed me on more than one occasion, respecting the terms under which these blocks should be available for selection; these terms are mentioned in Mr. Hopkins' letter on page 4, and again with some modifications on page 21. There are difficulties in the way of meeting their wishes, especially in the matter of allowing the purchase at a fixed price; the lots cannot be thrown open under the goldfields regulations, as they are within the township, and not under the jurisdiction of the Warden, and under the Land Regulations we have no power to sell town lots except by auction. What occurs to me as being the best plan for dealing with these blocks, is to hold them over until after the 1st January, then call them suburban lots, and deal with them under Section 88 of the Land Act as workingmen's blocks.

That was the suggestion of the Under Secretary for Lands, to which the Commissioner of Crown Lands on the 3rd December, 1898, replied:—

I do not like the idea of commencing the operation of workingmen's blocks on the goldfields; I should think the principle of the free areas (residential leases) should be liberal enough up there on our simplifying the system of transfer and lowering the annual fee, and confining its privileges to those who do not already hold land. If you deem it desirable, they should be submitted to auction at any time the resident requires, at a fixed upset price to be arranged before settlement.

Following on that minute the Under Secretary's telegram, which had so frequently been referred to, was sent. That telegram read:—

In reply to your wire to-day, I have held the matter over in hope of being able to advise some scheme by which your wishes could be met, but find it impossible arrange for sale of lots without going to auction.

He could not go to auction at once.

Lots cannot be dealt with as residence areas under Goldfields Act, because they are not goldfields. Therefore I can see nothing but to deal with them as residential lots under regulations gazetted 8th April last, copy of which was sent in my letter 7th October, with some modifications following. Holder to put his lot up to auction, with value of improvements added, at any time during currency of his holding. If this will suit, the matter can be fixed up immediately.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: But that telegram did not promise that the title would be given.

THE PREMIER: The Act provided for the granting of the fee simple subject to regulations. He had pointed out several times that even if as a matter of fact these men got their fees simple now, they would suffer an injustice, because the upset price at the present day would be considerably higher than it would have been when they got their land, in December of 1898. Hon. members need not think for a moment that the Government proposed to grant the fees simple of the blocks for nothing. The position was simply that if a man taking up a block under the terms of the telegram could reasonably believe that he had a right to have the land put up to auction at the end of 12 months, and moreover have a preemptive right to purchase the land at an upset price, then we ought to have the power to prevent the retrospective operation of the Amendment Act of 1900. If these men had a legal right they should not find themselves blocked by the retrospective operation of legislation. He deeply regretted that the necessity for proposing this clause had arisen. If he had for a moment wished to avoid responsibility, he would not have included the clause in the Bill. The provision was designed merely to redeem what he believed to be a promise made, not by this Administration or the preceding Administration, but, as shown by the telegram and the correspondence, a promise of the member for Northam. It seemed plain that a man might honestly have taken up a residential area thinking he was entitled to the fee simple in due course. If hon. members took the contrary view, they must vote against the clause. They should not, however, approach the consideration of the matter with any craven fear, because on the special facts of this case these men were believed to have a right to enforce certain legal claims, whatever those claims might be. Was it to be contended that we should, as it were, subject these holders of the residential leases to injustice because we feared that other holders of similar leases might ask for the fee simple? No other persons were known to have claims such as these particular men had. If similar claims did arise, they could be considered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Similar, bar the telegram.

THE PREMIER: The telegram was the whole thing.

MR. DIAMOND: Had any other telegrams similar to this been sent?

THE PREMIER: If other telegrams had been sent, why not allow other people their rights?

MR. TAYLOR: Such telegrams must be stopped.

THE PREMIER: Quite so; but this telegram was sent with Ministerial sanction, and at a time when there was Ministerial power to do it.

MR. JOHNSON: Why was the telegram sent to the individual, instead of being advertised in the Press?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had better ask the Under Secretary for Lands, and the Minister for Lands who was in power at the time.

MR. NANSON: Was it not announced in the *Government Gazette*, and in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, that the blocks were for sale?

THE PREMIER: Not that he was aware of.

MR. NANSON: It was, he thought.

THE PREMIER: What was the use now of asking these questions? Why were not these facts brought forward at a time when the member for Boulder could have explained the whole matter? Members should look at the telegram. Was it clear or not, following on the minute of the Minister? The intention was clear enough. He would like to think that no claim would be made, but looking on the correspondence, there was a right to force the fee simple being granted. But the amending Act of 1900 blocked the way. There could not be a greater principle than that of justice, and if men had obtained certain rights, these rights should not be taken away from them by the amending Act of 1900. If there had not been a telegram sent, the regulations of 1898 would simply apply.

MR. JACOBY: The telegram made a new regulation, practically.

THE PREMIER: Did not members think that was starting a legal quibble? He wanted to enable the men who had taken up the blocks to obtain their fee simple if they could prove their right. There was no shred of a case beyond the telegram. The men could not enforce their rights because of the retrospective operation of the Act of 1900. If he pro-

mised a man for good consideration to give him £5, the man would complain bitterly if he did not get that £5, having given the consideration. But if no promise were made, the man could not complain. Where there was an offer in writing that if a person took up a residential lease, that person should have the right to put the lease up for auction in 12 months, that, in his opinion, was a clear legal case. He would be pleased that no one could establish a claim; but there was a *prima facie* case clearly for an inquiry.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : While agreeing with the line of argument of the Premier, he failed to see why a telegram should give rights to the people of Boulder, and not give the same rights to the people living at Cue or in any other place. Here was a regulation of the department giving a privilege to one district which was not given to another. Numbers of people had taken up residential areas in all parts of the State. The Government brought in a Bill which was made retrospective, taking away, according to the Premier, the just rights of these people. A just right was established by the telegram, but not locally. If the telegram established the right of Jones at Boulder, it established the right of Smith at Collie, or Brown at Cue. The sending of a telegram to a particular district did not localise the right of the Government. If the right to extend the privilege to the people of Boulder existed, it established the same privilege to the people all over the State. But the Bill only proposed to establish the rights of the people at Boulder. If he announced in the Press, or by telegram, that he would give certain privileges to his business customers, the moment that announcement was published, every one of his customers could claim the same right. That was an ordinary commercial rule. If the Government had the power to send the telegram—and he was not arguing they had not just now—that telegram, according to the Premier, established the rights of individuals at Boulder, as it was not necessary to send a telegram to each of the 240 persons, and by this reasoning the telegram established the right of every other person in the country who was in the same position. If the Premier desired to argue that it estab-

lished only the rights of the individual to whom the telegram was sent, then the clause could only apply to that individual. If a man sent to the Under Secretary for Lands and asked whether he could get title in 12 months by putting his land up to auction, the reply to that question became a regulation, and applied to everybody in the State. If people took up land after the issue of that telegram, they had established rights under like conditions. If the Premier would make the clause universally apply to all persons, well and good. But the object of the clause was to apply only to the people at Boulder.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : The member for Northam made an earnest appeal to the House to keep in force the regulations gazetted in April, 1898. One would like the member for Northam to tell the House, after having framed the regulations in 1898, why the power under the regulations was not inserted in the Bill which at a later period was passed. After the regulations were approved by the Executive Council giving the right to grant residential areas on the goldfields, the Land Act was consolidated. One portion dealt with working men's blocks, empowering the Government to give half an acre of land to a working man within a goldfield area, and five acres elsewhere. The land had to be cut up, and the price fixed by the Governor, and the land had to be paid for within 10 years, the rent, being fixed by the Crown, and certain improvements effected. Although the late Minister for Lands assured members that the provision was so dear to him, the hon. member took care when the law was passed that the provision should not apply in its entirety on the goldfields. He (the Minister) objected, in starting this system of the nationalisation of the land, to apply the proposal to one part of the country only. He could understand the telegram being sent in the circumstances, therefore the Government should give effect to the telegram. He could not understand the remarks of the member for Cue, that in giving the people on the goldfields this right the Government were bound to give the same right to every man who had taken up a block of land. There seemed to have been a distinct promise given to a section of the community referring only to certain blocks

of land, therefore, persons in other parts of the country could not be prejudiced. The goldfields people should have the fee simple granted to them in the same way as people in the agricultural portions of the country had. Only lately the present Government had gazetted a new township, Edjudina, and had decided that every corner block of land and every alternative block of land in the township should be reserved to the Crown, and let under a system of business leases. The Premier was even going farther than the regulations which were framed by the member for Northam. The Premier's desire was to issue business licenses under certain conditions, so that the system would apply even to a greater extent. In this case the Government were quite justified in bringing forward this additional clause in the Bill. There was the promise which had apparently been made by the member for Northam, and the minute just read by the Premier. The Minister had power under Section 88 of the Land Act of 1898 to fix an upset price.

MR. JACOBY: The member for Northam did not admit making a promise.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES said he might read it again. [Minute read.]

MR. PIGOTT: Was that price arranged before settlement?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Under Secretary sent a telegram, and he (the Minister for Mines) thought there was a definite promise with regard to these blocks. The Government did not desire that these conditions should extend elsewhere.

MR. NANSON: What was the free area regulation?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It provided for a rental for 21 years, subject to payment of, he thought, ten shillings per annum, and a person had to reside on the property nine months out of the twelve. What one wished to point out more particularly was that the consolidating Act was passed some six or seven months after these regulations were framed, and power was then taken by the Minister not to grant residential leases but to issue these blocks on special terms. The Governor-in-Council was to have power to fix an upset price, and if the land was only half an acre there were special conditions as to resi-

dence and improvements, and after a certain term the lessee would have paid for the fee simple at the upset price. He was referring more especially to the granting of the fee simple, and this clause should not apply to all persons who had taken up blocks, but to those who originally took up the blocks of land particularly referred to, and who still retained them under the idea that they were going to get the fee simple.

MR. HASTIE: The first minute which had been read was to the effect that the Under Secretary had no power at that particular time, by law or regulation, to allow those people to occupy a lease. That was followed by a reply from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who contended that he could do a certain thing which the Under Secretary for Lands said he had no power to do. If this telegram induced these people to take up land, then, according to the Under Secretary's own showing, he had no authority to bind the department to that undertaking.

THE PREMIER: Was that a fair sort of objection to be taken?

MR. HASTIE: The Premier had said a few minutes ago there was no doubt the department had the power to give those people their leases with the condition of purchase attached to them; but that seemed to be absolutely contradictory to the first minute read by the Premier from the Under Secretary. There were some things connected with this telegram which seemed to him very remarkable. In the first instance the telegram was sent to the leading land dealer in that part of the country.

THE PREMIER: No; it was addressed to the mayor of Boulder.

MR. HASTIE: He was mayor of Boulder and a great many other things. At that time he was the leading land dealer.

MR. TAYLOR rose to a point of order. In justice to the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) he wished to say he thought the telegram set forth that it was addressed to the mayor of Boulder. His occupation then was that of a land agent, but he received that telegram as mayor of the town.

MR. HASTIE: At that time the member for Boulder was mayor of Boulder, and also leading land dealer in Boulder,

and he was also the man responsible more than any other ten men in the community for getting people settled there. At that time in that district the great bulk of the people living on leases lived outside Boulder, and those who wished to live in town lived in Kalgoorlie. Mr. Hopkins was then elected mayor of Boulder, and he moved heaven and earth and used all the influence he could upon the Government offices to compel people to leave the leases they were staying on and live in Boulder City. One did not particularly blame the member for Boulder, and he did not suppose that hon. member would object to be called the leading land dealer. This telegram was sent to him because of his very pressing representations to the Lands Office, and he (Mr. Hastie) had no doubt the hon. member made use of the telegram and pressed some people at any rate to settle on this land, and he would also impress upon them that if they settled upon the land there, and others came to stay round about, their land would become of particular value; so that the telegram to some extent at any rate induced people to settle on the blocks in Boulder, but it did not induce many, and so far as he recollected the bulk of these blocks were not taken up till a large number of the blocks round about were taken up. Since that time those blocks had, in the great majority of cases, changed hands, and the position was this. Here were a number of people who were very harshly dealt with. If they had not got what might amount to a virtual promise from the Under Secretary for Lands that they would get the freehold of that land, they would not have taken it, in spite of the fact that in many hundreds if not thousands of cases in that district, many other people willingly accepted similar conditions; and the great bulk of those people who at that time took up these leases had left the leases. They had sold out to other people. Some, he believed, did not sell out, but those who did not sell out were still there, and their property was far more valuable now than the property of those who previously sold out, and those were the people we were asked particularly to compensate. The Minister for Mines had just told us his idea of the case was that only those people who took up the blocks in the early days and were

still in the same position ought to be compensated; but if we were to do justice in this case, it was not the people who were on the land at the present time who should compensate, but those who took up those blocks and improved them and sold them at a very small price. Otherwise we should give to people on those blocks more than they ought to receive, and prevent those people who were the real pioneers in the case from obtaining the proper compensation. Another question had been raised by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) as to why some people at Boulder should be singled out for a special favour; and that question to his (Mr. Hastie's) mind was a very serious one, because all persons who had blocks on exactly the same legal conditions and regulations as the friends of the member for Boulder, and whose land was valuable, would want the right to obtain the fee simple, whether in Collie, Boulder, or Hannans. There were hundreds if not thousands of them in that position, and those people had just as great a moral right as the people whom it was proposed to compensate under the Bill. The Premier had told us, and there was a good deal to be said for it, that the Bill did not propose to interfere with this principle; it only proposed to compensate those people who had been harshly dealt with. But this Bill really proposed to compensate 240 people, and all the others knew perfectly well that there would have been no idea whatever of compensating those 240 people had not their representative, who was mayor of Boulder, daily, hourly and monthly brought this forward, and like the unfortunate widow, kept on and on until the Government could not resist him any longer. The result would be that any member of this House who had amongst his constituents owners of free areas would be always compelled to follow suit. If compensation was required, surely this was not the proper mode of granting it. It would be better for some tribunal to determine how much these people lost by the promise of the Under Secretary not being carried out, and if we could find that out and a sum be put on the Estimates, the Committee could consider the question. Let the Committee not compensate these people in this particular way, because if we did we should, h

felt certain, never be able to retain this free area system which we had at the present moment. He hoped the Committee would strike out the clause.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: In fairness to those interested, this important matter should be fully investigated. Better report progress.

THE PREMIER: If as suggested the clause were to be referred to a select committee, it should be postponed. Without such reference there would be difficulty in ascertaining all the facts, for the man who had taken up a claim on the strength of the telegram might have abandoned hope and sold to a stranger. Members who thought there was a good case for the clause should vote for it now; if not, strike it out. If the amendment were negatived, consideration of the clause might be postponed till the end of the Bill, and a select committee appointed to inquire.

MR. JACOBY: The Government might compensate the people.

THE PREMIER: The compensation might amount to the whole value of the land.

MR. PIGOTT: Strike out the clause and deal with the other clauses. There was a petition relative to these blocks, and this could be referred to a select committee. Some of the leaseholders said they had never expected the fee simple, and even refused to sign the petition. In doing justice to some it was not desired to make presents to others.

MR. DIAMOND supported the amendment that the clause be struck out. The Premier's advocacy of the clause was doubtless actuated by a sense of justice, possibly mistaken. Apparently the whole agitation had arisen in the neighbourhood of Boulder, and was in the nature of a land boom; and were Parliament weak enough to grant the concession sought, there would in a few months be a glorious "land drunk" wherever such areas were found. No request for titles appeared to have proceeded from the free selectors at Fremantle, though no doubt they as well as others would, if opportunity offered, claim similar rights. As to disinclination to break a promise, the House had recently, by passing a motion of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), broken a promise made by a former Premier (Sir John Forrest) to grant a site for the Fremantle

trades hall; yet here members were asked not to break the unauthorised pledge of a subordinate officer of the Crown. Why should a telegram be taken seriously which was evidently despatched under a misconception? Had there been anything in it, the notice should have been published in the *Government Gazette* and a local newspaper. Nothing could be gained by referring the clause to a select committee.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It had been said regulations existed under which these leases were granted, and that the Minister had ordered the despatch of the telegram stating the lands would be put up for auction at a subsequent date. The matter rested there, never coming before the Executive; and when the 1900 Land Bill was before the House it passed without objection, the selectors, though represented by goldfields members, being apparently well satisfied with their position. However, the Minister had no power to send the telegram, which doubtless misled the recipients into believing they would eventually have the land put up for auction, and some consideration might be due to the 12 or 15 persons who then occupied the land.

THE PREMIER: No subsequent occupiers would be considered.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The whole of the land need not be thrown open for sale because of a Ministerial error. The regulations must rule; and the people who had obtained the terms should have moved farther in the matter, but had slept on their rights when the Government brought in an Act stating that such lands should not be open for sale, but should only be leased. That could not be altered, though the original lessees might be compensated. But were they the present lessees? Some of the blocks had, he understood, been transferred five times. Better strike out the clause and refer the petition to a select committee, with a view to do justice to those misled by the telegram.

MR. JOHNSON: At the time the wire was sent to Boulder there was a resident Government land agent in the East Coolgardie district who was the official mouthpiece of the Government; and any communication giving a special advantage to the lessees should have reached them through the land agent, and not through

the mayor of Boulder. On the arrival of the telegram a number of the leaseholders said it was not genuine; and their conclusion was strengthened when on inquiry of the Government land agent they found he knew nothing about it. If the Government really did desire to extend special consideration to the people taking up these areas, they should have made that desire known through the Government land agent, and not through the mayor of Boulder City, a private land agent. The general impression at the time was that the telegram was not authoritative. This impression was strengthened by the circumstance that the message had not come through the Government land agent, and that the special considerations promised by it were not mentioned in the advertisements published in the *Government Gazette* and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. He himself might have made £300 or £400 if he had taken up a block on the strength of the telegram. It had been stated that the people who had taken up blocks at the time the areas were thrown open, and who still held them, were to have their claims under the telegram recognised, but that subsequent purchasers or transferees of the blocks were not to be granted fees simple. The fact remained, however, that some later holders, at all events, would have acquired the blocks on the understanding that the fee simple would eventually be granted; and therefore subsequent holders were as much entitled as original holders to the fee simple. Still, the proper view was that neither class merited consideration. The clause ought to be struck out, if only in view of the statement contained in the petition that the holders of blocks found their titles valueless for financial purposes.

Amendment passed, and the clause struck out.

Clause 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Permits to cut timber on reserves on payment of royalty :

THE PREMIER moved that all the words after "may," line 1, be struck out, with a view to the insertion of a new clause.

Amendment passed, and the words struck out.

THE PREMIER moved that the following be inserted in lieu of the words struck out :—

[The Minister may], subject to the regulations in force for the time being, grant to any

person a permit—(a.) To cut and remove timber, piles, poles, and barks on and from any State Forest or Reserve; or (b.) To cut and remove any piles, poles, and barks on and from any land held by him under lease or license from the Crown; or (c.) To cut and remove any piles, poles, and barks under license on and from any Crown Lands; on payment in either case of the prescribed royalty.

Subclause (a) gave the Minister the right, on payment of royalty, to allow timber, piles, poles, and barks, to be cut on and removed from any State forest or reserve. To this provision objection had been raised. Subclauses (b) and (c) simply enabled lessees and licensees to cut piles, poles, and barks on Crown lands on payment of royalty.

MR. HASTIE: Subclauses (b) and (c) were necessary; but Subclause (a) was altogether new.

THE PREMIER: It was not new.

MR. HASTIE: A number of forest reserves had been declared during the past year or two, for the benefit of particular localities; and if the Minister for Lands were allowed to authorise the cutting of timber on such reserves, reservation was practically cancelled.

THE PREMIER: The object was to permit of the removal of timber which was too old, or which was growing too thickly.

MR. HASTIE: Whenever a man wished to clear a piece of land of timber, he swore that the timber was dying. The power was a most dangerous one, particularly as the Minister had no possible means of ascertaining the facts relative to any particular reservation. Accordingly, it was his intention to move that Subclause (a) be struck out.

MR. ATKINS: Piles and poles were got only out of young timber, to which we had to look for future supplies. The State had already alienated to large companies three-fourths of the whole of its timber country, and certainly all the best of its timber country. In view of the motion recently adopted at the instance of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), great care was necessary. What was the meaning of the expression "State forests or reserves"?

THE PREMIER: Timber areas declared to be State forests or reserves.

MR. ATKINS: The flora and fauna reserve ought to be kept intact. Were Crown lands reserves?

THE PREMIER: Of course not.

MR. ATKINS: It was all very well for the Premier to say, "Of course not," but the meaning of the clause was not clear. Messrs. Atkins & Law for some time held a timber license, which, on being surrendered by them, was created a reserve. The same thing occurred in connection with a timber area formerly held by Mr. A. B. Wright. Were these the reserves referred to in this clause?

THE PREMIER: State forests and reserves were referred to.

MR. ATKINS: But hewers were at present cutting timber on both the reserves he had mentioned. If areas were reserved already, what was the necessity for passing this clause? Was the flora and fauna reserve included within its scope?

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. ATKINS: It ought to be.

THE PREMIER: There had been a practice in the past of allowing timber to be removed from State forests and reserves. He did not approve of it, and hoped the Committee would strike out Subclause (a). The power to cut timber from reserves, if exercised in a proper way, was very useful, inasmuch as it thinned the timber out, but the practice was so open to abuse.

MR. THOMAS: It was to be hoped the Committee would agree to the Premier's suggestion, and strike out Subclause (a). The people on the goldfields had great difficulty in getting reserves granted in the first instance. He was the first to get a State forest established to protect the timber in outlying centres against the Kalgoorlie mines. Last session an amending Land Bill was introduced, and it was suggested that a new clause should be inserted limiting the power of the people to cut timber from reserves through which they had to pass to get to country beyond. Neither the Kurrawang nor the Kalgoorlie Firewood Co., who were now putting a line to Broad Arrow, or any similar company would have the slightest feeling for the people in the district or the mines in the locality. They would deplete the reserves, and he knew that encroachments were being made in the neighbourhood of the Bonnie Vale and Toongabbie reserves. It was thought unnecessary last session to limit the power of the Minister to grant permission to cut, and

he (Mr. Thomas) pointed out then what happened in regard to the Bonnie Vale reserve. Permission was granted to the Kurrawang Co. to pass over the land to get to the timber beyond, and the company had power to cut the timber for half a mile on either side of their line. He (Mr. Thomas) went over the reserve before permission was granted, and an agitation was started to prevent the company from cutting the timber for half a mile on either side of the line. The people in the district were willing to allow the company to go over the reserve if the amount of ground from which they were allowed to cut was limited to one chain on either side. He sent a wire to the Minister pointing this out, but in spite of that opinion from the member for the district, backed up by other members, permission was granted to the people to cut timber for half a mile on either side of the line. The Committee thought it necessary to curtail the power of the Minister, and inserted a clause providing that in passing over declared timber reserves a company should only cut timber for one chain on either side, and that if encroachments were made the Minister should cancel the license. Abuses might arise in connection with this clause; therefore he hoped the Committee would strike out Subclause (a).

MR. ATKINS: All the subclauses should be struck out; if not, he would move that no farther reserves of jarrah timber should be thrown open for timber cutting.

THE PREMIER: People must be allowed to cut firewood on the lands of the Crown.

MR. ATKINS: But no farther reserves of jarrah should be thrown open to the public.

THE PREMIER: That was stopped already.

MR. ATKINS: Were people allowed under the Bill to cut timber on the flora and fauna reserve?

THE PREMIER: People should not be allowed; therefore he was prepared to strike out Subclause (a).

MR. ATKINS: Would that effect the object he had in view?

THE PREMIER: People had no right to be cutting on these reserves now.

MR. HASTIE: A reserve was a piece of timber land that was specially protected

from persons using it, or land set apart to be used by people inside a district. Outside of that area there was a large amount of forest land which was not open to be leased, but might be open to people to cut sleepers and barks.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

THE PREMIER moved that the following be inserted :—

The Minister may, subject to the regulations in force for the time being, grant to any person a permit—(a) To cut and remove any piles, poles, and barks on and from any land held by him under lease or license from the Crown; or (b) To cut and remove any piles, poles, and barks under license on and from any Crown lands; on payment in either case of the prescribed royalty.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 15, 16—agreed to.

Preamble—agreed to.

Title :

MR. JOHNSON : There was an amendment in the name of the member for Greenough.

MR. ATKINS : This was an important amendment. A man holding a pastoral lease who had some good land, some bad land, and some land of middling quality, might have the good land taken from him; therefore there should be some reduction of rent or alteration of the conditions under which the land was held, because if the eyes of the country were picked out, the lessee ought not to pay the same rent as previously.

THE PREMIER : The provision was not meant for the original lessee—it was the other way about. It was for the selector.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 29th October.

MR. T. H. BATH (Hannans) : I am not ambitious to become one of the talkative members of the House; but seeing that I represent nearly 10,000 electors of the Assembly, it is only fitting I should have something to say on the subject under discussion. I am all the more interested in this proposed amendment of the Constitution, for since my residence on the goldfields I have taken a great deal of interest in the question and

was secretary of a convention which met in 1898 and was representative of all the public bodies on the Eastern Goldfields. That convention made strenuous efforts to have some equitable representation in the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, and I as secretary had a considerable amount of work to do with this and was made aware of the inequalities existing. The arguments used against the proposals submitted by the goldfields at that time were, that the population was a floating one, that the fields were not likely to be permanent, that the goldfields residents were birds of passage, only coming to Western Australia to make a few pounds, a few hundreds or a few thousands as the case may be, and then clearing out, therefore they were not interested in the welfare of the State, and were not entitled to the same representation in Parliament as the more settled portions of the State were. Such arguments, based as they were on a misrepresentation of the real state of affairs, were calculated to still farther estrange the goldfields from the coast; an estrangement which has been brought about by the suspicious manner in which the older residents of Western Australia regarded the new comers from the Eastern States, and the idea they had that the Eastern Goldfields were a fair field for plunder. Since then, however, the granting of railway communication and the more intimate connection of the goldfields with the coastal districts has modified that feeling to a considerable extent. We now find that on the goldfields they have a warm regard for the interests of the other sections of the community, and are prepared to do their utmost to advance the interests of the State irrespective of particular interests concerned. I cannot offer a very warm advocacy of the proposals brought forward by the Premier. In fact I find much in them to adversely criticise. We find throughout the speech that there is a reiteration of the old argument that the pastoral and agricultural interests have some special virtue which entitles them to more consideration than the goldfields industry, and the Premier has deferred to this prejudice, I call it, in his draft of this measure. At the outset I desire to disabuse members of the idea that the fields at the present time lack permanency. Those members of this

House who have visited the fields, and have made themselves acquainted with the various districts, know that at the present time the fields are stable and solid, and that for a great many years to come they will continue to encourage the pastoral and agricultural industries as they have in the past. The old arguments which were advanced at that time, and which I think had little justification then, have no colour of justification now. And I think that the framers of this measure in reallothing the seats and constituencies should have tried to avoid making the interests of the goldfields subsidiary to the interests of the agricultural and pastoral areas. In this connection I am altogether opposed to the Premier's idea of representation of interests in the Assembly, because I think that distinctions of that kind are made a pretext for the continuance of those inequalities which we have so strongly protested against in the past. The proposal to cut out certain portions of what may be termed the farming constituencies in the South-Western districts, and to make them into a disjointed timber electorate, is one which, though it may secure to the party a safe Labour seat, does not meet with my approval. As a member of the Labour party I have an idea—it may be an erroneous one—that the farming community of this State will find, as they have done in New South Wales, and to a certain extent in South Australia, that the proposals of the Labour party involve no hardship, but, on the contrary, are likely to prove of advantage to the farming community; therefore, I very strongly object to the excision of what may be termed the liberal element in these electorates in order to secure an increase of seats for the agricultural party. Throughout the Premier's speech on this measure there was no advocacy of redistribution on a population basis. I think that with any redistribution this should be the idea in view. At the same time the undeveloped condition of Western Australia makes it necessary, I think, that some consideration should be given to the scattered electorates; and this is where a mistake has been made in framing the measure—that consideration is only given to the scattered agricultural and pastoral areas. On the other hand we have such areas as

the Mount Margaret, Menzies, Dundas, Murchison, and Mount Magnet electorates, which are just as much entitled to consideration on the score of the scattered nature of the electorates. In this connection, then, I think that what may be called the coastal-metropolitan area and the goldfields-metropolitan area should be put on the same basis. The quota of representation should be made the same as nearly as possible. Then the scattered coastal and goldfields electorates should be considered, and the quota of representation should be made something less. We should find then that the coastal-metropolitan area would be given about the same amount of representation as is comprised in the Redistribution Bill. The goldfields-metropolitan area would be given an additional member. The coastal constituencies—that is the agricultural areas—should be cut down from 17 members to 16, and the goldfields country constituencies should be increased from 7 to 11. The pastoral areas should be decreased from 4 to 3. That would retain the membership as it is at present—50 members. By doing this the Government would, I think, disarm the criticism which the proposals have evoked on the goldfields; and that there is a great deal of justification for this adverse criticism no member who gives due consideration to the subject can deny. I am altogether opposed to the proposals of the member for Boulder to reduce the membership of this House, nor do I think it is acceptable to the country at large. In this connection his quotation of Gladstone's opinion on the quota of representation is of no more value when viewed under existing circumstances in Western Australia than would be the opinion of a Kimberley blackfellow on mathematics. In England population is settled and constituencies are compact; therefore, without additional effort one member can represent about 10 times the quota that a member can in Western Australia. Then again we find that the Imperial Parliament is very much on the same plane as our Federal Parliament; that it has big national questions to deal with, altogether different from the multitudinous matters upon which statesmen in Western Australia are called on to legislate. In the United Kingdom also

they have a greater measure of local government than we have in Western Australia. The county councils there deal with a great many matters with which the Legislature of Western Australia is called upon to deal, and the revenue and expenditure of some of the county councils of the United Kingdom are as great as the revenue and expenditure of many of the States throughout the British dominions. I believe that the resources of this State, both as regards goldfields, agricultural, and pastoral areas, are such that we may expect that Western Australia in the near future will occupy a very commanding position in the Commonwealth of Australia. I believe that in the immature state of development at the present time it would be unwise for us to reduce the membership of this House. If the membership is retained as it is at present, or the number of members in the House retained as it is at present, it will continue so for a considerable time, and will be of advantage to the increasing population; so that we may expect that in the course of a decade or two the same number of members will not be called upon to do any greater amount of work than they are called upon to do at the present juncture. I am strongly opposed to the bicameral system of legislation, and I welcome the statement of the leader of the Opposition that he also is in favour of the abolition of the Upper House. We can only hope and trust that the members of his party will be loyal and support their leader in this respect. The original idea of a Legislative Council is that a man who is rich is better than a man who is poor, and that by the very fact of his possession of riches he is entitled to more political power than the man who is poor. I think that we in a community such as this should disabuse our minds of such an idea. I have always held that the man of property, or the man of wealth, is a greater anarchist than the man who goes round with a bomb, because he usually ends up by sending himself to another sphere in life. But the capitalist, if allowed unrestricted sway, is an anarchist because he is interested in the development of his property or the development of his own wealth at the expense of half the other members of the community. And I think that most

capitalists are prepared to put their conscience in cool storage and commit any crime in the calendar for a dividend of 100 per cent. In the past, Legislative Councils in the other States at least—it is not so much the case in Western Australia—have always shown ineptitude for dealing with great public questions. They have strictly confined themselves to matters dealing with property and wealth; essentially two matters they are called upon to protect. I think that such a condition of affairs exercises a demoralising influence on the community. We have here the old platitude so often repeated that the Legislative Council is a check on hasty legislation; but I would remind hon. members how quickly in Sydney, when the banking crisis affected the different States, the Legislative Council was prepared to put through a measure in order to make bank notes legal tender. I think the whole Act was passed through Parliament, and received the Governor's assent, in less than five hours. I think that the proposal for the simultaneous dissolution of the two Chambers will only tend to strengthen the position of the Council, because we must recognise that property electors will vote for both Houses, and when a simultaneous dissolution takes place on any matter upon which a difference of opinion exists between the two Houses, the property electors having votes for both Houses will exert a commanding influence over those who have only the right to give a vote for one House. The Legislative Council is more likely to come back determined to oppose the measure. I think that in a Legislature consisting of two Houses, one House must be paramount, and that the House which represents the whole and not a section of the electors should be the paramount one. I also think that the best way to make the Lower House paramount is to abolish the Upper House altogether as a useless adjunct of our legislative machinery.

MR. MORAN: The same with the Federal Parliament?

MR. BATH: No; not with the Federal Parliament. In conclusion, I cannot help remarking on the silence of members on the Opposition benches with regard to this proposal. I cannot help thinking hon. members recognise that even this measure as proposed by the Premier is

totally inadequate as regards many of the goldfields constituencies, and I hope that when the measure is in Committee they will render every assistance in their power to see that justice is done to all parties. I feel sure that if this is done, neither part of the State will have any reason to complain of any section of members in this House exercising an undue influence on legislation with which we are called upon to deal. I have no scheme to bring forward at the present juncture. We have had so many schemes, and I am afraid that if I were to attempt to produce one it would, like many of the best-laid schemes of mice and men (as Bobbie Burns says) probably "gang aft agley." I hope, with the assistance of other members who are desirous to make this a redistribution in the truest sense of the term, to amend the measure in Committee so that it will be more acceptable to the majority of the electors in this State. I cannot conclude without remarking that in this measure as it is placed before us for our consideration, we see little of the handiwork of Walter James the militant democrat in his pre-ministerial days. Whether it is that he has deferred to many of the old prejudices which have existed in the minds of members of this House previously to the rise of the goldfields towns, or whether he thinks that by deferring to those prejudices the Bill is likely to pass the Upper House more easily, I cannot say; but I do say that if in drafting this legislation he has drafted it with the idea of making it acceptable to the other House, it is only an additional argument in favour of the abolition of that Chamber. I hope that before the measure leaves the Committee stage it will be acceptable to the whole of Western Australia.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL (Plantagenet) : For various reasons I intend to oppose the Bill, which does not go far enough to suit my ideas regarding the redistribution of seats and regarding retrenchment. I say we should reduce the Legislative Assembly to 30 or 35 members, if not less. I should like also to contrast some of the districts which are to be thrown

out by the Bill with others which are to be retained. Take my district, which I have so long represented. With a population of 1,315 it is thrown out, while Roebourne, with a population of 550, is retained. Beverley, a district similar to that which I represent, is retained after it has been fixed up with 1,000 electors. I do not know whether "South-Eastern" is the term to use for the district in which I live. I believe "South-Western" is correct, though I call it the south-eastern portion of the State; and it is to be served as it always has been served by the Western District. Hitherto my district has had a representation in accordance with population; while under the present Bill it will have none at all. Albany is made up to 2,200 odd; the district I represent is simply merged into three others—partly into Albany, partly into Dundas, and partly into Williams. As regards the Upper House, I am not in accord with the member for Hannans (Mr. Bath), who wishes it altogether abolished. I think the Upper House has for many years been a very good buffer between us and hasty legislation, and I am glad to be able to say that some years ago I heard a gentleman in the Eastern States, for years a very prominent Labour leader, who had lived long enough to thank God that there was a Legislative Council in Victoria, though in that country the Legislative Council has been spoken of in most opprobrious terms. Taken on the whole, I think the only thing to do with this Bill is to accept the advice of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), to wait a while. As far as I am concerned, I have no fear of a dissolution, because I believe that even though the district I represent be excised, I have a very fair chance of being returned for an adjacent district; so I do not fear the result of the Bill, and wish simply to point out the injustice that is attempted to be done to the district which I have represented so long, by excising it altogether, by merging it in others, and by totally altering its representation. If there be any chance of rejecting this Bill, I shall most certainly vote against it.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley) : I wish first to join in congratulating the Premier on the very able and eloquent speech he made when introducing this measure. I followed the hon. member's

speech word for word; and the farther he progressed the more clearly was it borne in upon me that he is of all men at present in this State one of the most fit to bring in a Redistribution Bill. I have long foreseen that whatever Bill be brought in, no matter by whom, there must be tremendous difficulties in the way of securing a measure which will have any chance of meeting with general approval throughout the country. But by the words which fell from the hon. member's lips I was led to the conclusion that he must have given much careful consideration to this measure, and that after weighing all the facts as to the present position of the State, he has brought down the Bill honestly thinking it embodies the best scheme of redistribution which can in present circumstances be submitted. When we consider the tremendous extent of territory under the control of this Parliament, the great diversity of interests in our various industries, and the unequal distribution of population throughout the State—while in some places we have large numbers of people settled on very small areas, and in other places very small populations scattered over large tracts of country—these facts alone make it exceedingly difficult to produce a Bill which will even fairly well satisfy everyone who has a right to criticise such a measure. I was glad to hear the hon. member refer to the northern portion of the State in the kindly terms he used. Evidently he has not forgotten the time not long past which a great number of us who are here now can remember, when the southern portion of the State was almost entirely dependent on the northern, and how difficult it was at that time to keep the people in the North contented with the existing state of affairs. I refer to the time when much diplomacy was needed to prevent the colony of Western Australia being divided into two. At that time the Eastern Goldfields had not been discovered; but since those fields have been opened up and on account of the wonderful wealth revealed and the wonderful progress made on those fields, it is easy to understand why most members of this House are too often apt to imagine that Western Australia consists of the Eastern Goldfields, of the metropolitan districts, and of what

we term the agricultural districts in the southern portions of the country. The Bill in my opinion is a good Bill. I consider that it has gone in the way of redistribution as far as at present it would be wise for any Government to propose to go. I cannot believe there is a single member of this House who, if he looks at the maps displayed on the walls of the Chamber, will refuse to admit that what is known as the North, the tropical portion of the State, should have some representation in any Parliament existing in Western Australia, so long as the North and the South form one State. The argument which has been used by some gentlemen, that redistribution should have been settled on the basis of population alone, falls to the ground at once if it be admitted that the Northern portion of the State is to get any representation at all. If, instead of what is proposed in this Bill—reduction of members—an increase were proposed, and if we started with a basis that three, or four, or five members should be allotted to look after the welfare, the progress, and the development of the North, we should, working from that basis upwards, have been enabled, in a Chamber consisting of perhaps 70 or 80 members, to arrive at very fair equality in the matter of representation of every part of the State. However, most members will admit that, as I said before, the North has to be considered. To give an idea of how little is known of the North, I may observe that since I have had the honour of being in this Chamber I have on various occasions heard members, in referring to the North, state what they thought were facts, but what were absolute falsehoods. I do not mean to say that those hon. members spoke untruths in the strict sense of the word: ignorance of the northern portion of the State caused them to go astray. Only a few months ago I heard it stated in this House by one member who for some time was a Minister of the Crown, that from one northern industry alone, the pearling industry, the Government receive the huge income of £200 per annum in the shape of revenue. To show how far that member was out in his calculations, I shall quote from a report laid before the Federal House of Representatives, on matters pertaining to the pearling in-

dustry. The report of the Collector of Customs in the principal pearling part of this State, Broome, distinctly states that for several years past the Government of Western Australia, through customs alone, have been in receipt from the pearling industry of over £20,000 per annum. This fact shows how little is known in the South of the pearling industry, at any rate. The hon. member was considerably out in his calculations. The ratio of £200 to £20,000 is just about the ratio of what is known in the South of the position of the North to the true facts. The population of our northern portion is but small, and in view of its smallness I do not see how the Premier could possibly have allotted the North larger representation under the scheme which he has put before the House. I observe, however, that the hon. gentleman has, to a certain extent, taken under his care the welfare of the North by allotting to that portion of the State representation in the Upper House to the extent of three members, or an eighth of the total membership. By this means he has, to some extent, made up for the poverty of the representation which the North must inevitably be asked to accept in the lower Chamber. If the hon. gentleman had come forward, as some people expected him to do, in a very democratic style with a very democratic Bill, we might have had submitted to us a measure allotting representation purely on a population basis. I for one should have welcomed such a Bill, and given it my heartiest support, because under such a measure the North would have had no representation at all in this Chamber, and consequently the people in the North would have petitioned for separation, and this House could not have refused them separation. Speaking, however, on behalf of the State in general, I say we ought not to talk about separation at all. In the North we have a tremendous tract of country which is of immense value. The possibilities of the North are absolutely unlimited. No man can at the present time foretell what will happen there within the next 20 or 30 years. For this reason I say we must consider the North in the matter of representation, regardless of what may be thought of the disparity in the numbers represented by various

members. I ask hon. members always to bear in mind the fact that if Western Australia is to retain possession of that vast tract of country, the North must be allowed some representation in this House, and, what is more, the North must be shown every consideration. Parliament must not be afraid to spend money in that country for the purpose of development. Our endeavour must be to open up the mineral resources about the Pilbarra district, by means of railway communication wherever necessary. While on that point I may express my deep disappointment that this Administration has not fulfilled the promise made by our late Premier, Mr. Leake, who in the course of his Queen's Hall policy speech stated that he intended to place on this year's Estimates such a sum of money as would build a railway from Port Hedland. [MEMBER: Out of the surplus.] That again is a matter which the present Government have let slide entirely: it has not even been brought up for discussion. Certainly the Port Hedland railway would not run through my district, and for that reason I may perhaps be excused for not having mentioned the matter before. However, this is only a sample instance to prove the correctness of my statement that the North is not considered here to anything like the extent it ought to be considered. In its cattle trade, its wool trade, and its pearl-shell trade, the North produces exports valued roughly at £465,000 per annum—equal to, I believe, at least 33 per cent. of the whole export trade of Western Australia, exclusive of the gold. If trade has grown to that extent in the North practically within the last 15 or 20 years, what will it be in another 20 years?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: How does this affect the Constitution?

MR. PIGOTT: It affects the Constitution in this way, that if the North be not given fair representation in the House nothing will be done for it, and the end will be that the few people who are in the North will petition for separation and—what is more—will get separation. I say advisedly that I do not believe there is one man living in the North, or interested in the North, who would not gladly sign a petition for separation from the South. We do not consider that we have had fair treatment

in years past, and we do not expect to get fair treatment in years to come. We do not see how we can get in this Chamber such representation as will allow us to obtain what may be called fair treatment. The North pays into the Treasury a very large sum of money annually, and that money, or a fair proportion of it, is not spent in the North. [THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Nonsense!] The hon. gentleman says this is nonsense; but I defy him to adduce figures and show me where the money has been spent. I am aware that this year's Estimates provide a sum of about £10,000 to be spent in the North, but of that amount £3,000 is allotted to the stock routes — money which ought to have been spent years ago, as every member of the House will be glad to admit, and money which would not be spent now if the Southerners did not think that its expenditure will bring about a fall in the price of meat: that is why the money is to be spent in the North. I have brought in this question only so that our goldfields friends will, when voting on the Bill, bear in mind the fact that Western Australia has this great territory under its control, and that, even if there should be a great disparity in the number of electors who send in members from the North and the numbers of electors who send in members from the goldfields, it must be borne in mind that there is a great disparity between the respective areas of country under consideration. It has been said that the goldfields members represent men, and that the Northern members represent cattle. My predecessor, I believe, in replying to that argument said that the man on the goldfields is taking something away from the State when he digs up the gold, whilst the man who spends his time in farming or cattle-growing is doing something to make two blades of grass grow where only one would grow naturally, and is therefore doing the country greater good, is doing work which will in the end prove more beneficial to the State than that of the gold miner.

MR. TAYLOR: He has not proved it so far.

MR. PIGOTT: I would like to point out that the northern portion of our country has a coast line, roughly speaking, of 1,500 miles, a coast line of which so

little is known. We have on that coast five or six ports that are being opened up by means of which the trade of the country will be developed: all along the coast we are getting small settlements and trade is increasing generally.

MR. HASTIE: When you increase sufficiently we will give you more representation.

MR. PIGOTT: I do not want to see representation given when it is too late. I do not want to see a separation movement start again. As far back as 1881 I was in the northern portion of the country, and the industry that is now causing the principal trade in that district was practically only starting. There were a few breeding cattle sent there in those days, but such a thing as cattle being sold for market down South was out of the question. During the last three or four years we have been exporting from 16,000 to 20,000 head of cattle, and, what is more, these cattle are sent down to supply the southern markets. A start has also been made to export cattle from the Kimberleys to South Africa.

MR. TAYLOR: How many have gone to South Africa?

MR. PIGOTT: Six thousand. It is not many, but when we consider the country has only been stocked for 20 years, it is very good. The people down South are too apt to sneer at the northern portion of the country. I have heard it said that the North will look after itself. The North tries to look after itself, but with the assistance of the South the North would progress at a much greater rate than at present, and the full benefit would not only be felt up North but down South as well. I had thought when the Premier brought in the Bill he would have introduced a measure with a stronger democratic tone in it, but for my part I am pleased with the Bill as it stands. I think when the Premier went into this question fully he changed his mind to a very great extent. He evidently saw that by framing a Bill on the lines which he originally intended he would be introducing a measure that would practically be before its time. The time has not yet arrived, to my mind, when we should say that representation in this House should be given simply on population. We should consider the

interests or rather the industries of this country. I do not think that the gold-mining industry, with its huge export of gold and its tremendous amount of wealth, should have the complete control of the Government of the country.

MR. TAYLOR: A nice chance.

MR. PIGOTT: I do not think it has any chance whatever; but there are some members who think it ought to be allotted representation which would give it the complete controlling power in the country.

MR. TAYLOR: That is if you want to make the country flourish.

MR. PIGOTT: It might flourish and it might not. It has been said too that this Bill has been brought down with the knowledge, by those who introduced it, that it would never become law, and that the Bill was never intended to become law. With these views I totally disagree. I believe the Premier is absolutely sincere in this Bill. I do not give him credit for that amount of courage which the member for Cue gave him credit for, because I do not believe it requires a great amount of courage to bring in a Bill to amend the Constitution. An amendment of the Constitution has been promised for a long time, and if the Bill had been put off to-day, as it was put off before, the time must come, and that before long, when the Constitution must be amended. Therefore I think the Premier is not to be praised for any undue want of courage in bringing forward the Bill. I consider the Bill has been brought down at a very bad time. With the amount of work before the House, if the Bill becomes law the chances are that we shall find that it is defective in many particulars. With the Constitution Bill, the Redistribution Bill, the Electoral Bill and the Factories and Shops Bill, also the Estimates before us, we have more work than we can possibly get through, that is with decency, within the next three months; therefore I welcome the proposal of the member for Cue that this Bill should be sent to a commission, and when Parliament meets next session it should be the first measure brought before us, and no doubt at that time the measure will be able to receive fair and just consideration, and Parliament would then perhaps succeed in passing a Bill in such

a form that to a great extent would satisfy most people.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): It has been evident for a long time that such measures as the Constitution Amendment Bill and the Redistribution of Seats Bill should come before the House at not too distant a date. Most members, I think, when before their constituents pledged themselves to endeavour to have introduced and to support at any rate a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Difficulties of course appear at the first glance when one attempts to form an idea of the principle on which this Bill should be constructed. First of all if the Bill is to be fair and just, and calculated to meet the wishes of the country, and at the same time so framed as to make it a success—to get the Bill through both Houses—it must be moderate in its tone. In my opinion the Bill brought down by the Premier, and so ably and lucidly explained to the House, is an honest endeavour to meet the difficulty. It is apparent that the framer of the Bill recognised this difficulty, and he has done his best to bring before the House a measure which is likely not only to meet with the approval of a majority of members of the House, but have a chance of meeting with some favour in another place. I repeat, I look on the endeavour of the Premier as an honest one, and such an endeavour as at least is worthy of our careful and reasonable consideration. A Bill cannot reasonably meet the views of all parties and all sides of the House; and those who think that the Bill does not go far enough should remember that it is better to take an inch than to ask for an ell and get nothing at all. The trend of democratic legislation in the Eastern States has shown clearly that the moderate councils adopted have been successful, but that when too much was demanded by any section or sections of the community, legislation of a useful nature was consequently defeated; the result being that the moderate men in all parties, recognising this, do not ask for everything they want at once. No doubt it appears plain to ordinary comprehension that if a thing is right we should have it at once, but unfortunately, or fortunately perhaps, all men are not of the same calibre in mind, and consequently some allowance must be made for the opinions—I may

say the prejudices — of some people. Therefore, to obtain a measure of reform it is necessary for members to take a fair and reasonable instalment, if it is evident the whole cannot be obtained at once. With reference to the proposals in the Bill, I candidly think the number of members of the Lower House should have been left as at present. At the same time I must acknowledge that on the hustings 18 months ago I gave it as my opinion that the Lower House could reasonably be reduced to 40 members. I have seen good reason to alter my opinion. Population has increased, the industries of the State have increased, settlement is increasing, and now I do not think 50 members too many to look after the interests of this enormous territory. But the reduction of three members is not such a serious thing, and it is possible, as may be seen when the Bill is in Committee, to still retain the old number and at the same time do justice to the constituencies. With reference to the reduction of members in the Upper House—and under that subject also comes the question of the proposed abolition of the Upper House—I am of opinion that if that House is to be retained (and I can see no possibility of its abolition at present at any rate), the number of members proposed by the Premier, 24, is quite sufficient. I should myself be inclined to reduce still farther. But we will see when we go into Committee, I presume, that there is wisdom in the multitude of counsellors, and possibly we may all modify our opinions as to the number in both Houses. There is one thing in the Bill in regard to which I wish to put on record my opinion at once, and that is plural voting. I am absolutely opposed, and in the most decisive manner, to plural voting either for the Lower House or for the Upper House. The landed and capitalistic interest is quite sufficiently secured by the different suffrage for the Upper House, and I think it is out of reason in these advanced and democratic times to propose that a man should have virtually the possibility of voting for each province for the Legislative Council. As far as I am concerned, I shall do all in my power to have a clause inserted similar to the clause which refers to the Lower House, that no person shall have more than one

vote. In doing this I am not inconsistent. I have advocated it all my life, and I will certainly stick to my opinion, as I have never seen any occasion to alter it. There is one little point about voters on which I may be accused of erring in the direction of conservatism. Had I my way, I would give no man a vote unless he had been in the State for 12 months. I would not give a vote to a man who has been here only six months. With reference to the abolition of the Upper House, as I said before I do not think it is within the range of practical politics at the present time. But such a question is not pressing, because the provisions introduced into the Bill do away to a very great extent with the necessity for the abolition of the Upper House—I mean the simultaneous dissolution of both Houses and a joint sitting of the two Houses in certain cases. I think that if the Upper House differed from the Lower House on any democratic measure, the majority in this House would be quite large enough, in conjunction with the minority in the Upper House, to carry the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : If it were a solid House, the majority here could carry the Bill.

MR. DIAMOND : That is my opinion. We had this question before us in South Australia for many years, and I am strongly of opinion that it is a step in the right direction, and one which should liberalise, or tend to liberalise, legislation very much, and it would certainly be a great improvement on the present state of affairs, under which the Upper House, if it so choose, can block legislation. This offers a way out of the difficulty, and if it is not such a wide and open track as all members could wish, it is at least one likely to commend itself to reasonable men. There is another clause which I would like to have seen altered—I speak of payment of members. I am strongly of opinion that the remuneration given to members of this House and of the Upper House is not sufficient. It ought to be £300 a year instead of £200, and if any member moves an amendment to that effect in Committee I will support him. On a previous evening we had the usual appeal *ad misericordiam* about the gold-fields. I think no one can accuse me of not desiring to do fair and reasonable

justice to the goldfields, but I do think that it would be much better for the goldfields people to accept this fair and reasonable improvement on the existing order of things, in the hope that under this new constitution, and under this Redistribution of Seats Bill when it comes into operation, they may then be able to command a greater following in the House, and perhaps to carry out the reforms which they desire in a more able manner.

MR. TAYLOR: Will you point out the improvement?

MR. DIAMOND: I will when we are in Committee. In relation to this outcry about farmers and squatters getting far more than their fair share of representation, that is taking the point of numbers into question and nothing else, I will just ask the goldfields members especially to bear in mind, and think it over before we go into Committee, that great as is the dependence of Western Australia upon the goldfields at the present time, still the goldfields are but evanescent. They are things that come and things that go, sooner or later; not sooner in Western Australia I hope and believe, in fact I feel certain; but sooner or later minerals become a thing of the past. [MEMBER: Give an illustration.] The Valley of the Nile was fertile and under cultivation and supporting an enormous population in the time of King Solomon. To-day the Valley of the Nile is also under cultivation and supporting a large population. But where are King Solomon's mines? There is one up at Coolgardie, I believe. I would ask the goldfields members also to bear in mind that neither Coolgardie nor Kalgoorlie is Ballarat. When the mines failed to a very large extent in Ballarat—

MR. HASTIE: When did they fail?

MR. DIAMOND: Every child knows that the production of gold in Ballarat is nothing like what it was years ago. If Ballarat depended upon gold alone, it would not be the great, progressive, and prosperous city it is to-day. The district around Ballarat is one of the finest agricultural districts in Victoria. And, on the other hand, surely the wildest imagination could not conceive the possibility of Kalgoorlie or Coolgardie growing into a great agricultural district, after the failure, which I hope will be long

delayed, of the mines. I say this out of all good feeling and kindness to the goldfields. I ask them to be merciful in their strength, and to remember that there are other interests in the State deserving of important assistance. I trust they will not take it unkindly if the Premier proposes to give the squatters and farmers a fair and reasonable representation. One member, I think the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), somewhat let the cat out of the bag, saying the goldfields men did not marry. That is about the strongest possible argument that could be adduced against giving the goldfields too many members. I look upon it as a fact that a man who marries and brings population into the country is a far more valuable citizen and deserves more votes than the man who does not marry. There is another thing which has been mentioned more than once, and that is about interests; that interests should not be represented as against mere population. It appears to me that the whole of the tendency of not only this Bill but the present system is not representation of interests, because the mine-owners and the owners of the great timber areas are not represented.

MR. HASTIE: What have you got in this House?

MR. DIAMOND: The employees are represented, but a proposal by the Premier to allow the mine managers at Kalgoorlie to send a member to represent them would create a most terrible hullabaloo. I do not say I would advocate such a thing; but I say it is hardly fair to talk about the representation of interests, when the representation in the true sense of the word is no representation whatever. I ask members of the goldfields to bear that in mind. With reference to the remarks of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott), I sympathise very much with them. I do not think that the North is as strongly represented as it should be. I look upon the North, or the great North-West, as one of the greatest assets of this great country, and I am also a strong advocate for the construction of that railway from Marble Bar to Port Hedland. Whether it is to be done by private enterprise or by the State, I look upon it as one of the greatest things for the advancement of Western Australia at the present time,

and I think the member for West Kimberley was to a certain extent right when he said that there were not sufficient members representing the territory which includes the two Kimberleys and other districts. To that extent I sympathise very much with the hon. member. Separation was strongly advocated some years ago, and, as he said, there is a danger of such a thing again. I do not think it should reach that point, and in my opinion the members of this House, in their wisdom, should remember that this great northern district wants some encouragement. It wants the encouragement that the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie goldfields got at their outset, to set the northern goldfields going, and also to open up the great pastoral districts which exist. Finally, I would say this, that I advocate a policy of compromise. Let us get a moderate measure through. I sympathise a very great deal with the wishes of those who say that members should be on a population basis, and that only. But, as has been pointed out to-night, things that are possible in the boundaries of England are not so easily accomplished here, with our scattered population and our varied and divided interests. We are not concentrated, as they are in the older countries, and I therefore ask that those who think the Premier has not gone far enough—and in many respects he has not reached quite up to my anticipations—to join with me in accepting a moderate and reasonable compromise, in the hope that we shall get something better and more suitable to our views later on.

MR. TAYLOR: Where is the compromise from the goldfields point of view?

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): I was considerably interested in listening to the very able speech of the Premier in introducing this Bill, and more particularly was I interested in listening to the historical *résumé* which he gave. It must have appeared almost startling to members when the Premier traced out the very rapid progress that has been made in the history of this State during the last 12 years. In the circumstances I suppose the scheme must be adjudged a reasonably fair scheme. Tremendous difficulties have undoubtedly to be faced in bringing up a scheme of this description; and, taking all things into consideration, I do not

think that even those bitterly opposed to the Premier's policy can refuse to admit that this Bill is an exceedingly fair attempt to deal with an extremely difficult question. With some features of the Bill I do not agree. I strongly object to giving any farther representation to Perth, and would much sooner see the constituency of Balcatta excised and another member given to the Murchison. I look with considerable suspicion and disfavour on the increase in metropolitan representation in this House; and I say without hesitation that from what I have seen during my term in the Assembly, Perth would be equally well represented if it had no members at all. We have representing the country districts a considerable number of members who are Perth residents, and who take more interest in metropolitan matters than in what more directly concerns them as country members. I cannot help feeling some sympathy with goldfields representatives in the strong fight they have been making throughout this debate for some farther representation; and as an agricultural member I say here that I should not have any fear whatever that the agricultural districts of this country would not get fair consideration from a Ministry composed entirely of goldfields members; and even if this House itself contained a majority of such members, I have no fear that the enormous value of the interests which farming members represent would not appeal just as strongly to a responsible House of goldfields members as to members more directly concerned; therefore I wish to state here that I do not view with any degree of apprehension an increase of representation given in this House to the goldfields. The farming interests lose some representation under this Bill; but when I recollect the divisions taken in this House and the attendance on the benches occupied by farming members, it is evident that if a reduction of farming representatives would conduce to closer attention to their duties, agriculture would then be more adequately represented than it is now. If for instance such a reduction would lead among agricultural members to the consolidation of interests which exists amongst the goldfields members, that would be an advantage to agriculture; for though agriculture is

well represented in this House, it loses a tremendous share of that representation by the fact that its members are frequently absent from their seats and from debates. [MR. HASTIE: So you want more members?] No. I think it might be an advantage to have less, if they would attend more regularly. There is one feature of the Bill to which I take a strong objection, namely the provision for reduction of the number of Ministers. I have continuously insisted on Ministers retaining full responsibility for all acts of administration; and if we decrease their number, we cannot but take from them the power of adequately watching over and administering their departments. The salaries of Ministers in this State represent a small remuneration for the services rendered, if those services are well and faithfully performed. Rapid developments are going on all over the country, requiring the most constant and the closest possible oversight of Ministers to see that expenditure is not wasted. In every department considerably more economy is needed and greater efficiency. The civil service has grown up on the legends of the past, grown up in some cases with officers who do not possess the training and knowledge of affairs which entitle them to manage large departments. The service requires reorganisation throughout; and if we are to demand more economy, greater efficiency and better organisation generally throughout the service, I think we should take no safe step in that direction by reducing the number of Ministers. And I look with the gravest objection on an attempt to reduce Ministers which will make them practically recording clerks for the heads of the civil service. I wish to see the Government control the service and not the service the Government; yet the latter result will follow the whittling down of the number of Ministers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They will be only india-rubber stamps.

MR. JACOBY: That is what they will be. We must not be altogether led away by what has taken place in Victoria, where the number of Ministers is to be reduced from nine to seven; because the Victorian service is to a large extent organised; the conditions of Victoria are practically settled. What is coming in and going out Victoria can estimate almost day by

day and month by month, with a fair degree of precision. But here we do not know what will take place next month. Trade and commerce fluctuate, new developments make themselves apparent all over the country, new conditions arise in every direction which need to be dealt with; we have not reached that stage of settled and steady development and even of stagnation which has been reached in the other States; and until we reach it the small number of Ministers we now have is not more than sufficient, if it be sufficient, to meet the full requirements of the administration.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Victorian Ministers have far less work than ours.

MR. JACOBY: If our Ministers will do it properly, they have any amount of work; and I shall always endeavour to place full responsibility on Ministers, for I do not wish a Minister to say he had no time to attend to a matter because he had too much to do. Give them ample time to do it and place full responsibility upon their shoulders. If there be one thing this country requires, it is not more laws but better and more perfect administration; and I consider the welfare of the State would be better guarded not by piling statutes on our statute-book, but by more careful and economical administration. If by such a utilisation of our resources the State receives a full return for every penny it expends, the result must be to the material advantage of every worker and every other man doing business in this country; and the time had come when we must make administration one of the chief objects of this Chamber and of Parliament as a whole. Any attempt to cut down the present number of Ministers I shall most strenuously oppose. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), speaking the other evening on this Bill, said he failed to see any virtue in the farmer, and made a frantic appeal to any representatives of agriculture in this House to kindly toe the mark and give him some reason why the farmers should in this Chamber have special consideration. As I have before stated, I do not look with any fear on increased representation of gold-mining here; but I say the first duty of a nation whether young or old is to provide its food. Our first duty to the people is to make sure that if unfortunate circum-

stances should arise which would debar us for a short time from communication with other countries and other parts of Australia, we should have within our own borders sufficient food for our population. That is one argument why greater efforts should be made by this country to develop agriculture than have been made on behalf of any other industry. Agriculture should be placed absolutely first, as we shall never be absolutely secure within our borders until we produce all our food supply. There is another advantage in having in this Chamber a fair number of agricultural representatives. I consider that in legislation it is of the greatest benefit to have a certain continuity of idea; and the representatives of agriculture are those perhaps more frequently returned, and who have on the whole less chance of being defeated than other members. Certainly agricultural electors had returned time after time men with past experience of work in this House who helped to give to the whole some degree of continuity of thought and action. [MR. TAYLOR: The action is very slow.] It is a great advantage that there should be at least a certain proportion of seats in this Chamber which are not so liable to rapid change as the seats of members representing more populous centres. Then there is no doubt we must certainly look forward to the agricultural interest of this State to provide what will be the first and the main nucleus of a settled population. The enormous developments which are taking place must also be remembered. Some of the constituencies to be abolished by this Bill will not have to wait long before making an appeal to the House for farther representation. I have no doubt that had the awful land policy pursued by the Midland Railway Company been put an end to long ago, many of those constituencies such as the Moore, the Irwin, Greenough, Northampton, served by that railway, would have had centred in them a farming population sufficient to prevent any radical change in their boundaries. When we look back on the history of agricultural development in this country we cannot help congratulating ourselves on the very rapid advance being made; and I feel sure that when the next Redistribution of Seats Bill is before this Chamber, there will be found in consequence of

such rapid development an increase of population which will entitle agriculture to a much greater representation than under the Bill it will obtain. Regarding the Upper House, I consider it futile to talk at present about its abolition. No matter what ideas we may have regarding it, there is absolutely no practical possibility of giving them effect. The only method of doing that is for the electors gradually to return at each election the members of that House members pledged to its abolition; and the difficulties in front of that are so great that I fear there is no chance of its being abolished within my lifetime. [MR. JOHNSON: What about your leader's remarks when you were on the platform?] I am not now theorising. I was then listening to his remarks; now I am speaking. But if the Upper House were abolished, I believe the result would be the return of a far more conservative Lower House than we now have. [MR. TAYLOR: That is impossible.] That I feel sure would come about, and the electors would feel a greater weight of responsibility. They would not be so eager to return to this House people with so limited an experience of affairs as some members possess, nor would they expect a revenue of three millions or more to be adequately dealt with by members who themselves have dealt with very little revenue. An attempt would be made, I feel sure, if there were only one Chamber, to return to it men who have some claim to knowledge of affairs. The electors, I repeat, would feel more responsibility, and that would be a good thing. I oppose the suggestion of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) that the Bill be referred to a royal commission. I shall object to royal commissions as strongly and as often as possible. The definition of the boundaries of electorates is a matter of politics, and not one for a royal commission. If the House settle the number of electorates and other main points, the minor details, such as whether a boundary shall run so many miles north or south, can easily be dealt with by an ordinary surveyor. I object most strongly to any attempt to refer the Bill to a royal commission. As to the possibilities of the measure getting through Parliament, I do not know much. Certainly as it stands at present the

Bill has absolutely no chance of passing; but there is a possibility of members being able to lick it into such shape as will commend it to another place as well as to this Chamber. I wish to say emphatically that I altogether oppose the idea of holding a general election next year, provided things continue to go along as smoothly as they go at present. When there is strong conflict between evenly balanced parties, some justification exists for a dissolution; but in ordinary circumstances the least that can be done for those members who have to face the expense and worry of an election, besides making all the other sacrifices which fall on a member of this House, is to let the tenure of their seats run for the ordinary term of three years. I shall certainly vote for any clause which will delay the operation of the Bill until the natural death of this Parliament. On the whole, I regard the Bill as a very fair attempt to deal with a most difficult problem. I should perhaps have liked to see agriculture retain its full representation, but I recognise that to be impossible under a new distribution of seats. I think the Government have dealt with the subject generally in a very fair manner, and I doubt whether the measure is capable of much improvement. I shall have much pleasure in voting for the second reading.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I shall endeavour, in the few remarks I make, to speak not as representing any particular section of the community, but rather as one looking at the question in the interests of the country. I think there is a strong tendency to make too much of the slight divergencies which may exist between mining, agricultural, and town populations. Personally, I feel that this is a matter of too much importance to settle on purely local lines. The Bill, to my mind, represents a step in the right direction, but I consider that it falls far short of meeting the requirements of the people at the present time. The Bill does not, in my opinion, meet the demands which the electors have made. Before resuming my seat I shall attempt to show in what respect the Bill seems to fall short of the people's demands. At the same time, I regard the measure as a striking improvement on the Act under which we are working at present. It is

far better, I believe, to pass this measure and then hold a general election, than to go to the country under our present Constitution and with the present distribution of seats. Still, I hope the Bill will be considerably liberalised before it passes Parliament, because in its present state the measure is one which can but temporarily meet existing difficulties, and is not a measure that will commend itself to the country as affording a permanent basis of settlement, or even a settlement for any length of time of the adjustment of our representation. Before entering on the details of the measure I wish to say a few words on certain observations made by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) on a recent evening. The hon. member—who I am sorry to see is not present—went out of his way in the course of a speech on this Bill to attack other members for not being in their seats regularly, and he attacked suburban members especially. I have before taken exception to remarks of this sort. I do not consider that there is any warrant for aiming such observations at a particular section of the House at any time. At any rate, so far as regards myself, I have not laid myself open to attack on the ground of absence from the sittings of the House, and I object to being included in a general attack with any, if there be any, representatives of neighbouring constituencies who may be deserving of attack. However, as these attacks come almost invariably from members whose attendance is but spasmodic, better taste would be shown if observations of the kind were abstained from altogether. Personally, I feel regret that the subject of amendment of the Constitution is being dealt with in so thin a House as we have seen on each night that this debate has proceeded. At the same time I strongly object to any particular section of members being singled out for an attack which, if made at all, ought to be made generally. Absent members are not limited either to the suburbs, the goldfields, or the agricultural districts, but represent all quarters of the State. The member for Boulder, after his attack on absent members, gave us a quotation or two from a speech by Mr. Gladstone, with the object of showing that our Redistribution of Seats Bill should be based entirely on considerations

of population. The hon. member quoted the ratio in Great Britain as one member for 54,200 persons, and gave us that fact as a fitting matter for consideration during the discussion of this Bill. In this the hon. member, I think, took up an absurd position, because his remark, if it means anything, means that with our thin population we should consider this the number of people whom one member of Parliament should represent when we are framing our measure. If we are to consider solely the number of people, and frame the representation on that basis, we should have a Parliament consisting of four members, which of course is an absurdity. The hon. member, if he was serious, might with equal force have taken into consideration the area of the countries he was comparing. He might have quoted Great Britain and Ireland with their area of 120,000 square miles and their Parliament of 670 members, each constituency thus comprising on the average 183 square miles, against Western Australia with its area of, roughly, one million square miles, and its Parliament of 50 members, the average constituency thus comprising 20,000 square miles. It is, of course, absurd to talk of allotting representation strictly in accordance with population. If we attempted to follow even the proportion observed in the Eastern States, we should find our House far too small. The quotation from Mr. Gladstone given by the member for Boulder in his advocacy of equality of electorates caused me to look into the condition of affairs in Great Britain, with the result that I discovered as great inequalities in Great Britain as are to be found under the Bill proposed by the Government. For example, the English counties have one member for 12,042 electors; boroughs have one member for 9,811 electors; and the universities have one member for 3,540 electors. In other words, there is a discrepancy of nearly 9,000 between the number of electors represented by a member for a county and the number represented by a member for a university. The surprising thing is that in England the most densely populated constituency is that which is most efficiently represented. In Scotland, I find that the membership in the counties is one for 9,554 electors, that in the boroughs one member represents 9,504, and that in the universities one member represents

9,798 electors. In Ireland, the counties have one member for 7,323 electors, the boroughs one for 6,791, and one university a member for 2,359. Again there is a discrepancy of about 5,000 between the number of electors represented by a county member and that represented by a member for a university. These figures show that a Bill fathered by Mr. Gladstone himself contained, as I have said, far greater discrepancies than the Bill for an attack on which Mr. Gladstone's word formed the basis. The member for Boulder quoted the Federal Constitution to the effect that the number of members in the several States should be in proportion to the respective numbers of their people, and he objected to this Bill because it does not recognise that principle. The hon. member said that Perth with its five members has 16,443 electors, while the Kalgoorlie district with five members has 17,778 electors. The hon. member went on to say, "That to me is quite sufficient." I find that the number of electors per member is 3,288 for Perth and 3,555 for the Kalgoorlie district, or a difference of 267 between the two groups of electorates. [MEMBER: Surely that is not correct.] I quote the figures of the member for Boulder, but I do not guarantee their accuracy. At the same time, the hon. member who objected to this discrepancy of 267 electors per member, and recommended that in the Kalgoorlie district there should be a representation of one member to 3,551 electors, suggested that Perth should have a representation on the basis of one member for 4,085 electors, or a difference of 534 as against the Kalgoorlie district, and that the suburban constituencies should have one member to 4,236 electors, or a difference of 685 as compared with the Kalgoorlie district seats. In other words, the hon. member while advocating equality of representation introduced into his own proposals absolutely greater discrepancies than are to be found in the Bill to which he objected. Having pointed out these weaknesses in the hon. member's proposals, I do not purpose to enter farther into the subject. Turning now to the general principles involved in the measure, I strongly favour, in spite of the remarks of the members for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) and South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) as to the futility of the proposal

the abolition of the Legislative Council. Before this measure passes through the Committee stage I intend to give this Chamber an opportunity of expressing an opinion in favour of the proposal. We have been told to-night that the subject is not within the range of practical politics. My reply to any such contention is that, so far as I can judge, the majority of the people in this State undoubtedly are in favour of the abolition of the second Chamber, and that if the majority of the people favour the abolition of the second Chamber, the question surely has come within the range of practical politics. Otherwise, we should admit that the Legislative Council is stronger than the people of this State, an argument which I for one am not prepared to admit. But failing the abolition of the Upper House I advocate that we take a referendum of the people as to whether the second Chamber should be abolished or not. That would give an opportunity to members to put the matter to a practical issue and find out whether the question is within the range of practical politics. Failing to secure that amendment, I think we might reduce the qualification for the electors of the Legislative Council, and give to every adult voter the right to participate in the election of members to that body. If however that suggestion again should be defeated, I will endeavour to get an expression of opinion of members on the question of household suffrage for the Legislative Council, for one of the weak spots in the measure is that the franchise of the Legislative Council has not been liberalised in any direction at all. Then again I hope the Bill will, before finally leaving Parliament, abolish plural voting as far as the Upper House as well as the Lower House is concerned. I do not think any measure worth much which fails to do that. I recognise the value of the abolition of plural voting in connection with the Legislative Assembly. It is a step and a big step, but at the same time if we recognise as an evil in one case the system of plural voting, we must recognise the evil likewise in the other case. As to the joint sitting of both Houses, I cannot agree with the proposal. It seems to me that the joint sitting will become absolutely unworkable, because a three-fifths majority will be necessary.

Farther, there is always the danger that a large majority in the second House, the Legislative Council, might override a somewhat narrow majority in this Chamber; in other words the representatives of the people might be overridden by the representatives of only a section of the people, a principle which I think is opposed to all the principles of popular government. I think a far more simple way to solve deadlocks when they occur, where the two Houses differ, is to have a direct referendum to the people. If we want to be guided by the decision of the electors, we have the most simple, the most easy, and the cheapest form, and we shall avoid the trouble and expense and the difficulty of a double dissolution, and we shall avoid likewise the unsatisfactory solution involved in a joint sitting of the two Houses. We shall avoid the unworkable provision of a three-fifths majority, which can only be reached perhaps if half a dozen dissolutions take place. A weak point of the proposed dissolution is that if either one side or the other fails to get a three-fifths majority, the Houses are just where they were when they began; they are no farther forward and will have to begin *de novo*, and they may have to go in for another double dissolution before the matter is settled. It is a proposal which to my mind is unwieldy, unworkable, unsatisfactory and undemocratic, and I have no doubt it will be deleted from the Bill before the measure goes to the other House. We might provide that when there is a deadlock there shall be a referendum by a direct issue, without the confusion of a dissolution; because when there is a dissolution outside questions arise, sometimes the question of a man's politics, how a man has voted on some individual matter in the past, whether he has supported a Government or sat with the Opposition: the question of even a man's creed may be brought into the election as a disturbing element. I think it would be a far better and a far clearer issue if we had a simple referendum on the question in dispute. On the other hand I regard the proposal that a Minister should go from the House in which he is sitting, if indeed the Bill is passed by the two Houses, to explain in another place the measure which he is fathering, as a good step; I think it is one which will have

an advantage in its operation if adopted. There is another proposal, however, that a member of either House may act as an Administrator of the Government without forfeiting his seat. It seems an exceedingly undesirable position that any gentleman holding a position of Administrator, even temporarily, should have a connection with party politics : he should altogether be free from party bias, and I do not see how it is possible to get any such from the list of members in either House at the present time. Coming to the question of absent members in both Houses, I think the time for which a member can be absent without leave should be reduced. But this is only a detail of the Bill. The proposal in both Houses is that a member may be absent two months without leave, without forfeiting his seat. I hope to substitute the word "weeks" for "months" before the Bill is finally disposed of, because two weeks will cover any emergency a member may be troubled with, and it will afford him ample time to get leave, no matter what the circumstances are. In every possible way we should encourage members of the House—compel them as far as possible—to be regular in attendance. The reduction of Ministers is a question on which I listened with great interest to the member for Cue. Of course as he is a gentleman who has passed through a Ministerial office and has had a certain amount of experience, therefore we who are inexperienced listened with a great degree of deference to his utterances. In any direction like this economy must be adopted where it can be done without sacrificing efficiency. This country in the past has been too much under the government of heads of departments. I would far sooner, if necessary, have six Ministers in order to obtain fuller responsible Ministerial control ; I would far sooner see the expenses increased than see the system of heads of departments controlling the various State offices. I do not think the system at present is satisfactory ; I do not think we ever have had in Western Australia responsible government in the full sense of the term. I do not think Ministers have yet been able to deal with the thousand and one matters which should come under their personal supervision ; therefore, I listened with considerable

attention to what the member for Cue said, and I think the House will consider the matter very carefully before the reduction is adopted. At the same time we might well aim at economy in reducing the Governor's salary, and, without farther words on that, I hope it will be adopted before the Bill is disposed of. In regard to the number of members in the two Houses, while I am in favour of the abolition of one House, I do not see any great advantage to be gained by the proposed reduction in either case. The actual proposal of the Government is to reduce the members of the Assembly from 50 to 47, and the members of the Council from 30 to 24, in other words to save nine members for a total saving of £1,800. Now, the cost of the two Houses does not consist in the amount of individual salaries drawn by the members of the Houses, but in the staffs that would still have to be kept. Whether the members of this House were 47 or 50, and the members of the Legislative Council were 30 or 24, the cost of the staffs and the thousand and one contingencies, the upkeep, would be almost the same ; in fact, the saving would be very paltry, and there would be the grave danger of sacrificing the efficiency of the Houses, the grave danger of opening the way to jobbery, which would cost more than the £1,800 to the country. Small Chambers, in my opinion, are absolutely dangerous. Better far have one large Chamber than two small ones, and better, if we are going to retain the two Chambers, to have them of medium size than have two small ones in which the influencing of one or two votes would carry proposals which would do injury to the State. With the Legislative Council membership at 24, the quorum would be eight, and it does not need much more to be said than to make the statement that with a quorum of eight the Legislative Council can transact the important business of the country, can absolutely throw out Bills sent to the Council from the people's Chamber : eight members—that is five voting on one side and three on the other, being a majority of two—can cast out measures sent from this House. To members who think it desirable to reduce the Council in this way, I say it is far better to have no Council at all. Then there is the ques-

tion of the size of the electorates. Large electorates prevent the selection of the best men, and circumscribe the number available for choice. I resided all my life until six years ago in the State of Victoria. There they have a Legislative Council of 48 members, with a fairly heavy property qualification and very large provinces compared with the Assembly electorates; and almost invariably when there was a vacancy in the Council the gentleman who retired went in again unopposed, simply because the qualification of the electors was high and the electorates so extensive that very few men could afford to fight one of them: the consequence was that time after time, although the Legislative Council was working directly in opposition to the people of the State, though it was notoriously working in opposition to the will of the people of the State, men who were regarded as enemies of the people were returned unopposed to the Chamber. The same chances will face us if we reduce the Legislative Council to too small a limit, and make the size of the provinces correspondingly large. I would very strongly urge, not that we should make single electorates, but increase the number of provinces and reduce the number of representatives of the various provinces from three to two, and cause one member of each province to retire every two years. Make the term of the Legislative Councillors four years instead of six. This is a very moderate proposal indeed, and one which would enable the Council to be kept very much more in touch with the electors than at present. Some of the members who were elected six years ago were elected by about one-fourth of the persons who are now on the roll. As soon as a member goes in he recognises that he has a six-years term and can afford to do just as he pleases. He can afford to attend to his duties, or neglect them; he can afford to keep his promises or break them; he can afford to follow the will of the electors, or flout it, as he pleases; and very often, I am sorry to say, the member early in his career, recognising that he has no need to consider the people who sent him there at all, simply follows his own sweet will. Four years would be quite long enough for any member to be returned as a representative, and I think we may well,

instead of reducing the number of members in the Council, try to bring it into touch with the public by reducing the number of years for which the member sits, and by reducing at the same time the qualification of electors, so as to make it approximate more closely to the qualification of the candidate. The present absurdity is that a Labour member can become a candidate for the Legislative Council, but I am sorry to say that most of the Labour members are not qualified to vote in the selection of a member of the Legislative Council. The absurdity is that a man who is not fit to cast a vote for the Legislative Council is fit to sit in that Chamber and represent people who can cast votes. I hope we will abolish that anomaly, if we do not care to abolish the Council. I want to put this position clearly before the House, that if the second Chamber is to be retained, and particularly if the second Chamber is to be retained as a Chamber to represent property, then representation in the Assembly should be on population alone, and the principle adopted by the Government of trying to represent interests in the Assembly is absolutely a false principle. If we are to have a Legislative Council which exists solely for the purpose of representing interests, we do not want two Houses of Parliament to represent interests. If we are to have two Houses, and one of them is to represent interests, let us be fair to the people and let us say that the people's House shall represent nothing but the people. I put this forward as a fair claim to those members who are in favour of retaining the bicameral system: let us have a Legislative Assembly that shall represent nothing but the people of the State, because interests will still be represented, and they will be represented here then in proportion to the number of persons engaged in the various pursuits. I would still give a certain amount of allowance to the more sparsely-populated districts; that allowance would be for the purpose of making it possible to give them as wide a selection in the choice of candidates as possible, because I recognise that where it is hard to fight an election, where it is expensive to fight an electorate, we should circumscribe the electorate to some extent, in order to give the people a chance of getting the fittest man from their point of

view who can be got, in order to make the candidates more numerous, if possible, than they would be if the electorates were larger. But before I come to the principle on which I think the Government might go, I want to allude to the Forrest electorate, and I desire to express my regret that the Government have included that proposal in their Bill, because I cannot understand why they should cut timberworkers out from these other electorates. I cannot understand why they should do that any more than they should cut out the ironworkers from the West Perth electorate, or cut out all the members of the Labour party from the Subiaco electorate, which would mean a sad misfortune, of course, to the State. I cannot understand why a principle not recognised in any other case is simply adopted in regard to this one constituency. I do not admit for a minute that the Labour vote in any constituency is a disturbing element. It may be a disturbing element to the member of the constituency, if he happens to be an Opposition man, just as the reactionary element in my constituency may be and sometimes is a disturbing element to me; but I do not for that reason ask to cut the reactionary element out of my constituency; and I do not ask that the agricultural element shall be cut out of my constituency.

MR. JACOBY: Have you any?

MR. DAGLISH: A great deal.

MR. JACOBY: Good. I did not know you were so respectable.

MR. DAGLISH: I recognise that the interests of the agriculturist and the Labour man are largely identical. The only difficulty is that they have not yet met each other; they have not yet got to know each other. But there is no disturbance between the two. Of course, the trouble some of the goldfields people make now and again sets up the backs of the people engaged in agriculture. But in the principles of the Labour party there is nothing to frighten any agriculturist. I am quite satisfied that there are many men who could enter this House who would be satisfactory to the farming people in Wellington, the Murray, and Plantagenet, and at the same time to the workers in the timber industry. The only trouble has been that so far the farmers have been pleased

to follow those who have said to them, "Oh, the Labour men are always against you; the Labour men are your foes; the Labour men want to finish off agriculture in this State."

MR. JACOBY: You voted against the duties on farm produce. That is why they suspect you.

MR. DAGLISH: I do not think the hon. member is serious in that, because I am quite satisfied many farmers do not want those duties. But this is not the time to argue about that. Reference has been made to the advisability of referring this question to a royal commission, and here again I agree with the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) that Parliament ought not to part with its rights in this respect. I think we are quite competent to settle a question like the redistribution of seats, if we have time. If necessary, the matter should be referred to a select committee, but certainly not to a royal commission, because after all Parliament, unless it gave full power to this royal commission, would have to go over the work of the royal commission subsequently. We would have to adopt the report or else reject it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They could deal with it in the recess.

MR. DAGLISH: I think there is time to settle this before the recess. I think it would be better for Parliament to take a month or two longer to settle it rather than to hand it over to some independent body to settle. As a suggestion, I would point out that adopting the Government proposals in regard to the reduction of members in this House, and taking 47 members as the standard—we have to adopt the census figures, and I regret the Government have not brought forward any later figures than those—we have 107,000 electors, or one member for 2,276 electors. Nineteen of these members represent what may be called dense electorates, thickly-populated electorates, and 28 of them sparsely-populated electorates. I would suggest that some principle like this should be adopted, that the thickly-populated electorates should have one member approximately for 3,000 electors; that would give 19 members representing 3,000 electors each, which would dispose of 57,000 of our electors. Then we have left about 50,000 for the remaining 28

members. Kimberley, Pilbarra, Gascoyne, and Roebourne at present have four members under the proposed Bill for 2,751 electors, or one for every 687. I think that even after allowing for the large area covered by those electorates, this allowance is a little too great, and we might reduce their representation from four to three, and they would still be left with one member to 917 electors. And this again would leave about 47,000 electors for the remaining 25 members, or one member to every 1,900 electors. There would be a margin for those sparsely-populated electorates of 1,100 electors per member, and I think it ought to be considered a very liberal allowance indeed. But I notice that some of the sparse electorates and some of the big electorates are much more unfavourably treated than others, and I select seven of them as examples. These seven have over 21,000 electors here, according to the Government proposal. They are Cue, 2,607 electors; Kanowna, 3,502; Mount Magnet, 2,802; Mount Margaret, 3,515; Menzies, 3,186; Northam, 2,505; Yilgarn, 3,274—making a total of 21,391 electors, or one for every 3,056 electors. I have gone through the Bill and have taken these electorates, independent of agriculture or mining, and also independent of the question of mining or metropolitan, because I think we ought to look upon a broad question in a broad light, and I cannot understand why those seven electorates, sparse electorates as they are, covering a big area as they do, should have only one member for 3,056 electors, leaving the other 21 members provided to represent 27,293 electors, or one member to every 1,299 electors. I think it would be fairly reasonable to take some such basis as I have suggested, and give one member to the densely populated electorates for 3,000 of population, and one member for about 1,900 or 2,000 in the sparsely populated electorates. As a special concession to the northern electorates I would let there be one member to every 900 electors. I think that if we adopted some such basis as that, we might bring up a Bill that would be satisfactory to the public of this State for a few years to come, and that would at all events avoid the necessity of another Redistribution of Seats Bill almost immediately the next Parliament meets. I hope hon. members

will give their careful consideration, not only to this question of redistribution, but likewise to the various provisions of the Constitution Bill that I have alluded to. I hope that ultimately it will be possible to send from this House a Constitution Amendment Bill which will be fully worthy of the people whom we are here to represent, and that it will be a measure that will last for some considerable time as a monument of the work done in this Assembly.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) : In dealing with this subject, as goldfields people we are bound to take rather a parochial point of view. I deprecate at any time any argument in a discussion in this House in the direction of goldfields *versus* coast. I have tried to recognise that both must have representation and both must have consideration from Parliament. But still in this Bill, as a goldfields member, one is bound to argue from a goldfields point of view, and one is bound to say that the goldfields are not getting that just representation which they deserve. One can congratulate the Premier on his able speech on this Bill, but at the same time it is not possible for a goldfields member to congratulate him on this measure. Still, seeing that the Bill is anything but satisfactory, one must recognise that the Premier made an able speech in dealing with a measure that I believe he must admit is not all one could desire. He was dealing with a great subject and a difficult subject, and his effort was a good one. We must give the Government credit for bringing down a Bill, and allowing members an opportunity of discussing it, because, as I have said, it is a big question and one on which members have different opinions; and it is utterly impossible for any Government to bring down a measure that will satisfy all parties. Therefore, I say the Government deserve credit for bringing down the Bill, and allowing all parties to express their opinions on it. In 1899 Sir John Forrest brought in a Bill to amend the Constitution, because at that time we did not have in this State equitable representation; and the anomaly arose through the discovery of gold. With the discovery of gold, population flowed into the country; consequently the representation we had previously was not a fair representation after that discovery.

We find exactly similar circumstances to-day. The Premier has brought in this Bill because through the marvellous development of our goldfields population is still increasing; the representation to-day is not an equitable representation, and the inequality is this time brought about not by the discovery of gold, but by the development of our goldfields. And though we see the prosperity of the State is due to the discovery and afterwards to the marvellous development of our goldfields, yet we find that in this Bill the goldfields receive from the Government little or no consideration. I believe the Premier recognised he was not giving the goldfields that fair representation they deserve; for in order to break down the comparison which can fairly be drawn between goldfields and other constituencies, he classifies two of the latter, Collie and Pilbarra, as gold-mining constituencies. Now I must join with other members in saying there is nothing in common between gold-mining constituencies as we know them and the constituencies of Collie and Pilbarra. I for one shall not recognise either as a gold-mining electorate. Collie is an agricultural seat, and an agricultural seat only. [MR. JACOBY: Nonsense!] Well, we will say it is an agricultural and coal-mining seat; but coal-mining and gold-mining are not the same; and it is not fair for the Premier to include Collie as a goldfields seat so as to argue that the goldfields have in the Bill so many representatives. [THE TREASURER: Call it "mining."] I say, arguing as a representative of the goldfields, I cannot recognise Collie as a mining seat. As regards Pilbarra, we must recognise that it is difficult to say exactly what Pilbarra is. No doubt the member for that district will say it is truly a mining seat; but I fail to see that it is any more a mining than a pastoral seat. I cannot perceive that it represents to any extent either the mining or the pastoral industries. I am inclined to say that Pilbarra is a seat representing territory, and I believe that is all one can say for it. I do not desire to say anything in connection with the coastal seats, nor to complain of the seats allotted to the metropolitan area, or to the ports; but I do desire with the member for Subiaco and others to take exception to the Forrest

seat. It was said this seat was cut out to take the Labour vote out of the agricultural areas. I maintain that is a direct insult to Labour, being practically a statement that Labour cannot represent an agricultural seat. I submit that if we carry the argument to a logical conclusion we must say Labour cannot represent a mining seat: and yet we find the Government do not try to cut the Labour vote out of the goldfields, though they say it is absolutely unsafe to allow the Labour vote to dominate the agricultural areas. I maintain that a Labour member is quite as good a representative of agriculture as is any other member in this House. [MR. JACOBY: And he votes against it every time.] I think all members are well aware that Labour members are pledged to a certain platform, which platform contains, and contains only, social legislation. Outside of that Labour members have as much liberty as any other members in the House; and therefore if a Labour candidate stands for an agricultural seat he is pledged to certain social legislation, and I submit that in nearly every case where a farmer has stood for an agricultural seat he has advocated the platform to which the Labour candidate is pledged. Still the fact remains that because the Labour representative is called a Labour candidate and not an agricultural candidate, the Premier says it is absolutely unsafe to allow a Labour member to be returned for an agricultural area. I am therefore utterly opposed to the Forrest electorate, and I trust it will not pass this House. It is one of the electorates which should be tacked on to the other agricultural seats. In speaking to this Bill the Premier said:—

Those of us who believe that population should have and must have adequate representation in this House will, I believe, also realise that the areas small in population and greater in territorial size should have a special claim on us.

Now the Premier has certainly carried that out so far as the coast is concerned. We find that he has given the coastal and metropolitan areas representation on a population basis, but we find when he comes to the goldfields central area he does not give representation on the same lines as he gives it to the coastal and metropolitan areas. For instance, here in

the metropolitan area we have something like 2,800 voters returning one member, and on the goldfields there is required something like 3,500 electors to return a member. I maintain that if the Premier desired to give representation according to population in populous centres, he should treat the metropolitan area and the goldfields central area alike. If he carries out that principle, he will give us another seat in the goldfields central area, and put us on the same basis as the coast. Again he says:—

We recognise population in populous centres, and area and interest where population is scarce; and in each group we desire to secure as far as we possibly can fairly equal representation.

THE TREASURER: You say it is only a question of one seat.

MR. JOHNSTON: No; I have just dealt with the metropolitan area. The Premier gives to the metropolitan area more representation than he gives to the goldfields central area; and as I have stated, if he allocate one more seat to the goldfields central area, then he will put the populous areas of the coast and of the goldfields on exactly the same basis. Then he says he gives the scattered areas more representation. He has carried out that principle on exactly the same basis as he has observed in regard to populous centres. He has carried it out on the coast, and not on the goldfields. I maintain it is just, in view of population, that one more member should be given to the populous centre on the Eastern Goldfields, and that in justice two more seats should be given to the goldfields in respect of area and interest. The Premier has not recognised the goldfields to the same extent as the coast, as will be seen when we look at such seats as Yilgarn, Cue, Mount Magnet, Mount Margaret, Dundas, and Kanowna. There representation is not allotted according to area and interest, but according to population; while here on the coast it is altogether different. He has carried out his argument on the coast, but not on the goldfields; and while these anomalies exist one cannot expect the goldfields members to agree to this Bill. I recommend to the Premier that instead of reducing the members of this House to 47 he leave the membership as it is now, at 50. He should give the three

extra seats to the central area of the goldfields—that is Kalgoorlie and the surrounding districts—and one to the Murchison; for undoubtedly the Murchison should have another member. Two members cannot represent the Murchison as it should be represented. Then the remaining seat should be divided between Menzies, Kanowna, Mt. Margaret, and like areas. The representation there is not according to area, and is certainly not according to interest. With these changes I feel the Bill will give satisfaction to the goldfields people; without them I am pretty sure it will not; and even if the Bill should pass, we shall have the same agitation for another redistribution of seats as we have seen on the fields during the last two or three years. If, on the other hand, the membership be left at 50, giving the goldfields three additional representatives, goldfields people will have no argument for drawing a comparison between coastal and goldfields constituencies. We shall be treating the goldfields and the coast exactly alike, and the goldfields will be satisfied. If the Premier does not wish to leave the membership at 50, let him strike out the Forrest electorate, add that to the other agricultural electorates, and still give the three extra seats to the goldfields. I recognise the great difficulty surrounding redistribution of seats; but still, taking the Premier's argument of population, territory, and interest, we must all agree that with such a basis he has not given the goldfields fair representation. On this question I do not desire to say more, save that I understand the procedure is that should we pass the second reading of the Constitution Bill, we shall have an opportunity of discussing whether there shall be 47 members or 50, or even less than 47. Immediately this Bill passes, if it does pass, I understand we shall then submit the Redistribution of Seats Bill to a select committee, which will adjust the boundaries.

THE TREASURER: That is intended.

MR. JOHNSON: Then I shall support the second reading of the Bill, try to get the membership left unaltered in this House, and then to have the Redistribution of Seats Bill referred to a select committee, when I trust we shall get fairer representation of the goldfields.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I am glad to note firstly that under this Constitution Act Amendment Bill, provision is made for the issuing of electoral rights, and also that under it plural voting is to be abolished. I hope the Government will see their way to raise the payment of members from £200 to £300 per annum. Apparently it would be out of order for a private member to move an amendment to that effect: I understand that the matter can be dealt with only by message from His Excellency. I hope, therefore, that in deference to the wishes of a large number of members Ministers will favour the transmission of such a message, in order that opportunity of discussion may be afforded. I agree with several members who have spoken in opposition to reduction of the number of Ministers, and for obvious reasons. In a young country such as this, it will certainly be necessary for some considerable time to come that a sufficient number of Ministers should be available to go into all State affairs carefully and adequately. I consider the Premier has misnamed the measure which he asks us to support. I have carefully examined the Bill itself, the schedules, and the figures issued with the Bill for our information, and I cannot discover any real attempt whatever at redistribution. All I can find in the Bill is a slight attempt at a rearrangement of electoral boundaries, without materially altering the present state of affairs. I do not for a moment advocate that a Redistribution of Seats Bill in a country of this kind should be strictly on a population basis. In fact I have stated before that I shall oppose any system of redistribution based entirely on population. We can, however, more nearly approach that end than does the Premier's proposal. One would think from the speeches of some of the farming members that the goldfields are absolutely in opposition to agriculture. [MR. JACOB: Who said that?] I gathered as much from the speech of the member for the Swan. [MR. JACOB: No fear!] I gathered that the hon. member derived from the speeches of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) and others the impression that there is opposition on the part of the goldfields towards agricultural districts. I have said before in this House—and I think I

have every goldfields member with me in the statement—that the goldfields are prepared to do everything possible to encourage agriculture. I for one, however, as a member of the House, refuse to subscribe to the statement that it takes two and a half persons on the goldfields to equal one in the agricultural districts; and that is practically the proposition which the Premier has asked us to affirm. The hon. gentleman has told us that interests have to be considered. I think the Upper House exists for the special purpose of representing interests rather than population. We are told also that the Premier's object in making fresh boundaries of electorates is that diversity of interests may not exist in the one electorate; but under this new Bill several instances are to be found of diversity of interests in the same electorate. In my own constituency there is diversity of interests. It contains pastoral, agricultural, seaport, and also mining interests, copper as well as gold. We have been told, farther, that sparsely-populated districts are to receive special consideration; and yet, as the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) has just pointed out, the sparsely-populated districts on the goldfields are expected on an average to contain more voters than the thickly-populated metropolitan areas. If remote electorates are to be specially considered, certain goldfields districts will be entitled to two or three members in place of one. If diversity of interests entitles to consideration, then I claim that my own constituency, for example, is entitled to something like five members. It would be entitled to one for its mining interests, one for its ports—for we have several ports in addition to those whose claims I have advocated here; the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) described Eucla as a splendid harbour—then my electorate is entitled to a member for its agricultural and one for its pastoral interests; and finally, I think everyone will agree that, seeing the whole of the rabbit-proof fencing is in my constituency, Dundas is entitled to a member for rabbits. The Premier's suggestion is that the metropolitan areas on the coast shall have one member for every 2,886 voters, but that metropolitan areas on the goldfields, of which there are six, including Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Ivanhoe,

Hannans, Trafalgar, and Coolgardie, shall have an average of 3,391 voters per member. One would imagine that if there is to be any difference at all, it should be in favour of the goldfields, which are practically 400 miles distant from the seat of government, whereas Perth and Fremantle are right at the seat of government, and moreover have their interests looked after by the large number of Perth and Fremantle residents who represent country districts, in some instances even mining districts. The coastal country districts having 25,000 voters get 17 members, or one member for an average of 1,482 voters. The country districts on the goldfields, with an electoral roll numbering 22,000 odd, are to get only eight members, or one member to an average of 2,787 electors. The pastoral electorates have three members for an average of 680 voters. The whole 14 goldfields seats—I include Pilbarra with the goldfields seats, and not with the pastoral seats—are to have under this Bill 14 representatives, with an average of 3,045 voters. This number is largely in excess, even including the country districts, of the number proposed by the Premier as affording a fair basis for a Perth or Fremantle seat. It takes five goldfields residents to make one pastoralist, and, as I said before, two and a half goldfields residents to equal a farmer. I recognise fully that the number of members cannot be reduced below the Premier's proposal. I should be glad if a proposal were made to reduce the House to its late membership, namely 42; but I recognise that the general feeling is entirely against that; in fact, some members go so far as to advocate that the membership should be raised to its present standard of 50. I do claim, however, that the Premier's proposal is not equitable. I should give the coastal-metropolitan area 12 members, with an average of 3,127 electors, and I should give the goldfields-metropolitan area seven members, or one for every 2,906 electors. The country districts on the coast should have 14 members, or one to every 1,800 electors; and the goldfields country districts should have 12 members, or one to 1,858 voters. The pastoral districts might have two members, representing 912 voters each. In this scheme also the number of gold-

fields voters would be slightly in excess of the number of electors per member for similar districts on the coast. I recognise to the full that in this matter of redistribution of seats the Government and the Opposition have joined forces. As a cross-bench man, I am pleased once again to be able to stand up for what I consider the rights of the country, and in doing so to oppose both Government and Opposition. I believe that when it comes to a division, a good many cross-bench men will be found not prepared to swallow what the Government and the Opposition offer us in the way of redistribution of seats. The leader of the Opposition has apparently given the Bill his unqualified support. The member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) also seems perfectly satisfied. Even the Labour party, so far as I can gather from speeches by members, are prepared to support the second reading. Personally, I intend to oppose the second reading. I recognise that the Government, the Opposition, and the country party, in joining forces, have a big majority in this House. I recognise that if this Bill is allowed to go into Committee, the goldfields will not be given that consideration which is held to be their due by goldfields members; and there is no chance of amending any important feature of the Bill, because the majority against goldfields members will be too strong. On that ground I intend to oppose the second reading. If I can get only one other voice in addition to mine to call "no" when the question is put, I intend to divide the House, in order that it may be seen what members are in favour of depriving the goldfields of their just rights. The Upper House, it must be owned, represents interests. I shall not enter into figures respecting the relative importance of the various industries of Western Australia. Everyone will agree, I think, that the gold-mining, so far as production of wealth is concerned is equal to all other industries of this State put together. The total value of any other industry may be multiplied a good many times before it reaches the value of the mining industry. If in the Upper House industries and interests are to be entirely considered, it is hardly fair to ask us to swallow the proposal that in a House of 24 the gold-

fields shall have only two constituencies, one of them even containing a large number of agricultural and pastoral voters. It can safely be maintained that goldfields representation in the Upper House will be at the outside five in a total membership of 24. If we propose to continue, as we have done in the past and as the Premier proposes under this Bill, to make interests paramount in the Upper House, then I declare that it is an absurdity to ask us to agree that out of 24 members only five shall be allotted to the gold-mining industry. If the Bill passes the second reading—apparently it will because of the amalgamation of forces I have referred to—I shall oppose its going to a select committee, but shall support its reference to a royal commission, and see if we can do something to improve it by that method. I was hoping that after it had been pointed out by every goldfields member, the Government would have been prepared to withdraw the Bill in order to further consider the matter and bring in a Bill more equitable in its distribution. Because I see no possibility of amending the Bill so as to give justice to the mining industry, I intend to oppose the second reading.

MR. F. REID (Mount Burges): I have little to say, after the lengthy discussion of this Bill, and I shall only refer to matters that directly affect the electorate which I have the honour to represent. I do not agree with the proposal to reduce the number of members of this House from 50 to 47. I am of opinion, realising the great possibilities that lie before this country, that if a reduction of the number of members were made at present, it would mean only a short time indeed before the necessity to bring in a Bill to increase the number of members again was apparent. On the goldfields of this country, and indeed generally all over the country, population is increasing so rapidly that it would be necessary in a short time to increase the membership of the House; therefore I think three additional seats should be provided in the Bill. In connection with the question of payment of members, I certainly think the payment should be increased, because while an opportunity is afforded to the people of the country to send direct representatives here, members to represent Labour, if we are to have members

representing Labour in Parliament, and if they are to thoroughly and effectively represent the people who send them here, then they must stand in as independent a financial position as any other members in the House. I think the payment to members should be increased from £200 to at least £300. In the other States, at any rate in New South Wales, and there we know the cost of living is much less than here (about one half), members receive £300 a year: they have received that amount for the last ten years.

MR. JACOBY: That is equal to about £400 a year here.

MR. REID: The members in New South Wales have what is equal to about £400 a year in this country, and the Parliament there only sits about the same number of hours as the Parliament here does. Besides members in Sydney have more pleasant surroundings than we have: that is my opinion of that question. A statement has been made to-night by one of the members for Fremantle that the goldfields are an evanescent quantity. I think the member who made that statement knows very little about the goldfields. I know he has visited the goldfields over and over again, and I think it must be prejudice on his part as far as the goldfields are concerned which has overcome his judgment. Any person who has been on the goldfields and who has seen the mighty city, I might say, that has sprung up there—almost as if the power of an Aladdin's lamp had been used—in ten years, and which is the wonder of the world to-day, anyone who has seen the mines and realised the vast quantity of gold which is turned out from those mines, and that not only in one patch is gold found but that the gold is obtained over a length of four hundred miles by one mile wide, must know that the goldfields are not an evanescent quantity. Rich mines have been discovered and are being worked to-day, but the small and scattered population, comparatively speaking, on the goldfields is not sufficient to thoroughly prospect the vast area of auriferous country in this State. Men in the back country are discovering fresh reefs and lodes almost weekly. When we know that there are a number of big mines on the

fields in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and when we understand the reefs are living down to the great depth of 1,600 feet, we must come to the conclusion that the Eastern Goldfields, like the other goldfields of the world, have come not for ever, but I will say that one hundred years from now gold-mining will be in its infancy on the Eastern Goldfields. If that is an evanescent quantity, which is only to be with us for a short time, I am very much surprised indeed. I am opposed to the striking off of Yilgarn, and the amalgamation of Mt. Burges and Yilgarn electorates. It is unjust to the people of Yilgarn and unjust to the people of Mt. Burges to have the electorates combined. Considering the vast potentialities lying before that district, and the large area of ground in the Yilgarn electorate—and when I tell members that only a fortnight ago a payable reef was discovered right in the centre of Southern Cross—it is quite possible that within the next six months there will be a population of seven thousand or eight thousand men in that electorate; there is nothing impossible about it. I do not say such a thing will take place, but if it should, and we once mark these electorates off, a great injustice will be done to the goldfields people in that locality. I trust the Government, when considering the Bill in Committee, will agree to revert to the old system of having a member for Mount Burges and a member for Yilgarn. Mt. Burges is big enough at the present time. Speaking from memory, there are something like 2,600 electors in that district, and surely 2,600 electors are sufficient to demand a representative in this Chamber. I sincerely trust that when this measure is in Committee the Government will permit of an alteration being made so as to allow the present membership for Mount Burges and Yilgarn. I may say that I am right out opposed to the Upper House. I believe that Chamber is not only useless but dangerous, and should be abolished. In the old country we know there are the House of Lords and the House of Commons; and England being the pattern on which all other Constitutions have been modelled, of course the system in vogue in the old country had to be followed. But when the House of Lords was established in the first place, it was for the purpose of con-

serving and watching over the interests of the land owners. The House of Lords was brought into existence not for the purpose of checking hasty legislation, but for the purpose of looking after the interests of a class. If in this country we must have two Houses, we should demand that every man who has the right to vote for a member of the Lower House should also have the right to vote for a member of the Council. If we adopt that system we shall reduce the whole thing to an absurdity. What would be the use of having the same set of people electing two sets of men going to separate Houses to legislate for them? The one set would pass legislation to be confirmed or rejected, as the case might be, by another set. The best thing that can be done is to abolish the Upper House. I trust, in connection with the Yilgarn seat—and this is the greatest grievance I have—that it will be reinstated. Kalgoorlie should have another member; and in justice to the people of Mount Margaret, although their member is very assiduous in the performance of his duties, he has too great an area of country to represent, and the district should be split up into two electorates. I, with other members of the Labour party and with the members of the House generally, object to the creation of the new electorate Forrest, in three separate pieces, each one not adjacent to the other. It would be very awkward for any member to represent that constituency, and I hope the Government will permit of a substantial alteration being made in the direction I have pointed.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): I would like to say only a few words on this matter. I think as goldfields all over the world have a moving population, that in a country like this, where we are borrowing large sums of money, the goldfields should not be given too great a representation, for if the goldfields "peter out" has they have done in other parts of the world, the people of the State who have to remain here will not think that the goldfields should have all the representation and all the power of spending the money. If to-morrow a better goldfield broke out, half the population of the goldfields would clear out straight away. The goldfields people stay as long as it pays them.

MR. TAYLOR: How long does the farmer stay?

MR. ATKINS: The farmer stays here always. Goldfields have never made any town in Australia. Ballarat was never made by the goldfields, and after the gold went down, the town was carted away. I saw them carting it away. The same can be said of Clunes, of Creswick, of Mount Alexander, of Castlemaine, of Kyneton, of Bendigo, and every other goldfield town in Victoria.

MR. TAYLOR: Charters Towers in Queensland?

MR. ATKINS: I have not been to Queensland. The hon. member can talk plenty of Queensland, without anybody else talking about that country. I do not see that the goldfields people should be always crying out like the daughter of the horse leech, "Give, give"; as if nobody else is to have any sort of representation. It is not fair. People who are fixed in the country are entitled to more representation than a lot of persons who come here to-day and may be gone to-morrow; but I do not consider that the industries which are here to stay are nearly as well represented as the goldfields people are. I am not going into the question of the Upper House, because I do not think that is our business to-night. It is for us to say what we want to do ourselves. I think the Upper House had better mind their own business, and that we had better mind ours.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:17 o'clock, until the next evening.

Legislative Council, Wednesday, 5th November, 1902.

Bills: Indecent Publications, third reading	...	PAGE
Public Works, in Committee (resumed), progress	...	2004

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister)
Plans of Fremantle Harbour, as described in the schedule to the Fremantle Harbour Trust Bill.

INDECENT PUBLICATIONS BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

PUBLIC WORKS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the 29th October; Hon. M. L. Moss in charge.

Clause 83—Penalty for destroying survey marks, etc.:

HON. R. G. BURGESS moved an amendment as to penalty, but withdrew it temporarily.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY, moved as an amendment that the words "to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding two years" be struck out for the purpose of inserting: "for the first offence to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, and for any subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds." He said he was aware that it was a serious offence to interfere with any surveyor's mark wilfully, but this clause did not say "wilfully." A man might do it quite accidentally; in driving through the bush he might run his cart over a survey peg, and thus become liable to imprisonment. The magistrate would have no other course than to imprison him; yet to imprison a man for such offence was too severe.

HON. G. RANDELL: The penalty provided for in Clause 83 did not apply in relation to any mark put down in the bush indiscriminately by persons wanting to sell land or anything of that sort, but to interference with marks fixed under this measure.