

Hon. M. L. MOSS: In view of Clause 186 this clause was altogether unnecessary and should be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Clause 95, providing an instruction to the licensee not to mortgage his license, had been struck out, but this clause provided that the licensee should produce his license at his licensed premises. Probably there was very good reason for the clause. While not opposing the suggestion to strike it out he did not wish it to be taken that he agreed to it.

Clause put and negatived.

Bill again reported with further amendments, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, requesting them to make the amendments agreed to by the Committee.

#### BILL—PERTH MUNICIPAL GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING.

Message received intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

#### BILL—FREMANTLE FREEMASONS' LODGE, No. 2 DISPOSITION.

Message received intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Workers' Compensation Act Amendment. 2. Tributaries. Received from the Legislative Assembly: Hon. J. M. Drew in charge.

*House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 20th December, 1910.*

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

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1. Report of proceedings of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year ended 30th June, 1910. 2. Factories Act—Regulations relating to the use of phosphorus. 3. Midland Junction Municipality—By-laws relating to advertising hoardings. 4. Bunbury Harbour Board—Amended Regulation. 5. Claremont Municipality—By-laws re Special Roll for Loan Poll. 6. Fremantle Harbour Trust—Annual Report, 1909-10.

By the Minister for Works: 1. Annual Report of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department.

#### QUESTIONS (3)—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

*Modern School Assistant.*

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Education: 1. Is it the intention of the Education Department to bring a lady from outside Western Australia to take the position of 1st assistant at the Modern School? 2. Are there no ladies in our service with the necessary qualifications for the position?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1. No decision has yet been arrived at, but it is the intention of the Inspector General to recommend a lady from Adelaide for the position. 2. There is no lady at present in the service of the department who possesses the necessary science qualifications.

*Delegate to Conference.*

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Education: Who is to represent Western Australia at the conference of educationalists to be held in England during next year?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: The Inspector General of Schools.

*Teachers and Inspectors.*

Mr. SWAN (for Mr. Price) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Have Messrs. Hamilton and Milligan been gazetted as advisory teachers? 2, Has there been any alteration in their duties since the date of their applications for the position of assistant inspector, if so, in what particular respect have their responsibilities been increased? 3, What are the duties of the inspectors of household management classes? 4, What are the duties of the Inspector General of Schools? 5, How often and for how long has he been absent from the State during 1909 and 1910? 6, What travelling expenses, if any, were granted to him, and for what purpose? 7, How many schools in the metropolitan district has he visited since his assumption of office—exhibitions, investigations, and opening of new buildings not to be included in the list? 8, Is it a fact that the Inspector General has recently sent a memo. to the inspectors informing them that in future they will only be allowed the regulation leave of absence—a fortnight per annum? 9, What inspectors have had annual leave of absence exceeding one fortnight during the past four years?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, They have been gazetted as "Organising Teachers." 2, No alteration. 3, The duties of the inspectors are to examine and report upon the work that is being done, and to advise and assist the teachers. 4, The ordinary duties of an under secretary in regard to the general supervision of his Department, and in addition the organisation of the work of the schools. 5, 1909, seven weeks and six days; 1910, two weeks and four days (annual recreation leave and Easter holidays). 6, 1909, expenses were

paid by the Commonwealth Defence Department for him to attend the conference on the subject of physical education in connection with the new defence scheme. £55 13s. by the State Government to enable him to visit the Education Departments and schools in the other States and New Zealand. 1910, nothing by the State Government. The Commonwealth Defence Department paid expenses to enable him to attend the Physical Education Conference. 7, No record is kept. 8, The memorandum recently sent defined the work which would be expected of each inspector during the five weeks when the schools are closed at Christmas (copy attached). 9, The inspectors have had such portions of the school Christmas holidays as have remained after certain work required by the department has been done.

Sent to Inspectors McCollum, Robertson, Gamble, Clubb, Klein, Wheeler, Murdock, and Miss Nisbet.

In connection with the Christmas holidays, I beg to forward hereunder the decision of the Inspector General:—

All inspectors to be considered on duty up to January 1. Their work during this time to complete monitors' examinations and any outstanding recommendations, reports, or correspondence. The inspectors will thus get all Christmas and New Year holidays allowed to civil servants. For the remaining three (3) weeks, inspectors will have their fortnight's leave, the third week to be occupied with compiling the annual report. If this is in by the end of the school holidays, inspectors will be considered to have had simply the regulation fortnight. —(Signed) J. P. Walton, Chief Inspector of Schools. September 27th, 1910.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY RE-SLEEP- ERING, COOLGARDIE - KAL- GOORLIE.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that about 100 sleepers lately taken up on the Kal-

goorlie to Menzies railway are being used to re-sleeper portion of the Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie railway? 2. Does he know that the railway between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie is badly in want of re-sleepering, and that anywhere through the section the dog spikes may be drawn with the finger and thumb? 3. The railway being in such a bad condition, why have the fettlers been taken off it, and put on fencing, such work properly belonging to the Works and Ways Department?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. Yes. When re-sleepering a section it is usual to take the whole of the sleepers out. The sound ones are used again for renewals, etc. 2. No. 3. The railway is not in a bad condition. The fettlers belong to the Way and Works Branch, and the condition of the road is so good that some of them could be temporarily spared to do the fencing in question.

#### QUESTION—MINERS' HOMESTEAD LEASES.

Mr. SWAN (for Mr. Bath) asked the Minister for Mines: What action has been taken by the Minister *re* applications for Miners' homestead leases Nos. 188E and 189E, recommended for approval by the warden on August 24th?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: As the land, the subject of the applications, is in the Trans-Australian railway reserve, their approval has been deferred pending a decision as to what land will be required for railway purposes; it is hoped that a decision will be arrived at shortly.

#### QUESTION — RAILWAY STATION, SOUTHERN CROSS.

Mr. HORAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Is he aware that strong complaints are being made regarding the undermanning of the Southern Cross railway station and generally the chaotic condition of the goods sheds? 2. Will he take immediate action to remedy the difficulties complained of?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. The Commissioner advises that no complaints have been received in this respect, and he is not aware of such a condition existing. 2. Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, MAGNET-SANDSTONE.

Mr. LAYMAN (for Mr. Brown) asked the Minister for Works: 1. What was the total cost of purchase of all sleepers used in the construction of the Mount Magnet-Sandstone railway? 2. What was the total cost of purchase of all other materials, stores, and plant used in the construction which were provided to be supplied by the contractor in the contract for which tenders were received?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1. £16,000. 2. This information should be made the subject of a motion for a return. It will require some time to prepare.

#### BILL—FREMANTLE FREEMASONS' LODGE No. 2 DISPOSITION.

##### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of five amendments made by the Legislative Council now considered.

##### *In Committee.*

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; Mr. Hudson in charge of the Bill.

On motion by Mr. HUDSON Council's amendments agreed to, without debate.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

#### BILL—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 15th December.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson): The leader of the Opposition when debating the Redistribution of Seats Bill which the Government have presented for the consideration of the House, was very fond of iterating and reiterating the word "gerrymandering." I must

confess that for some little time I did not quite grasp what he was aiming at, nor indeed the meaning of that word. He was good enough, however, as his speech went on, to explain what gerrymandering actually meant and also to give us the derivation of the word. Then he went on to apply it in pretty stringent terms to one or two proposed new electoral boundaries.

Mr. Bath: One or two?

The PREMIER: One or two, yes. More especially did he apply it to my own electorate of Sussex, and the hon. member held up to the House the constituency of Sussex as being a fearful example of gerrymandering. He said that I ought to be ashamed of the alteration to the boundaries of the Sussex electorate, and that I had made the alterations because I was ashamed to leave Sussex, although it was rumoured that there were other seats waiting to receive me. He said that was the reason why I altered these boundaries—in order that I might still retain my old district, the electorate of Sussex. I admit I should feel it a great wrench indeed if any circumstances were to arise which would necessitate my severing my connection with the old district of Sussex. I have had loyal support in that electorate, and I have made many political and personal friends there—and a good many strong political enemies. But that is the salt of political life, to make strong enemies and very staunch friends. I must say I do not wish so far as my friends are concerned to represent a better electorate than that of Sussex during my term in this House. I am not ashamed of my electorate: I am not ashamed even to leave Sussex should the necessity arise; but I would be terribly ashamed if I were to leave the old settlers, the old pioneers who have been resident in that district for the last 60 or 70 years, who have done so much to build up the State of Western Australia, and who are now cultivating the land in that district, or if I were to leave the new settlers who are settling in that portion of the State, and the agricultural people who will do so much for the future of the State, to

the tender mercies of a nomadic crowd of timber workers who are now coming into the district.

Mr. Johnson: You can afford to insult them now.

The PREMIER: I am not insulting anyone.

Mr. Scaddan: You are.

Mr. Bolton: A nomadic crowd of timber workers!

The PREMIER: Are they anything more than a nomadic crowd; are they nomadic or are they not?

Mr. O'Loughlen: They are men, anyhow.

The PREMIER: Of course!

Mr. Underwood: And they have no tender mercies? They are honest at any rate.

The PREMIER: I am quite prepared to admit the hon. member is honest.

Mr. Underwood: It is more than we can say about a few people.

The PREMIER: I hope at any rate it is not more than can be said of any member of the House.

Mr. Underwood: I am doubtful about that, judging by the Bill you have brought in; very doubtful.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: If the hon. member has exhausted all his indignation by his interjections, I shall proceed to endeavour to point out that I am justified in the action taken in connection with this electorate. I would be unjust if I permitted a settled community with all their interests in the district, or in any other district in Western Australia, to be outvoted by a temporary population which is here to-day and gone to-morrow.

Mr. Scaddan: You have altered it now.

The PREMIER: A population which may be there for a year or two, and then will depart to pastures new where the people can follow their employment. I should also be accused of injustice if I were to leave the townspeople of the chief port of that district, Bussellton, to be disfranchised because they were outvoted by a temporary influx of voters.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a wonder the worker exists at all!

The PREMIER: The worker exists all right; he is a good man in every respect; we are all workers; and I am sure I am doing no injustice to the worker, and that he has got all he is entitled to. But when hon. members have finished interjecting I shall try to proceed with my argument. Of course they will have an opportunity, which every member in the House has, of replying if they wish to do so. I presume I am entitled to put my position before the Chamber. I say at once that I did have, and still have, consideration for vested interests, for industries, for commerce, and that it would be absolute injustice to permit one clique, one section of the community, to out-vote all those interests and the community of interest among the electors of that district outside the timber workers themselves. In other words, is community of interest to be ignored; is it to be ignored entirely, except, as the leader of the Opposition has put it, between wage-earner and wage-earner? It appears to me he goes rather further than that, and I read into his statement that it is between trades unionists and trades unionists, because certainly when he says community of interest should be between wage-earner and wage-earner, he does not take into consideration that vast number of people who are earning wages, though not under the direction or rule of the trades unions which hon. members oppose so frequently represent. Of course I can quite understand that what the hon. member is aiming at is that the farmers and the tillers of the soil must not have any community of interest. Anyone else may have community of interests, but those who are settled upon the land, those who are really the foundation and will be for many centuries to come the mainstay of this country, must not have this community of interest which the hon. member claims for the wage-earner. Why, he twitted the Attorney General with having kept community of interest before him right through in the draft of this measure, and he said that the Attorney General had never been able to get away from it!

Mr. Bath: No, he did not.

The PREMIER: He did, I have the report here with me. Let me say at once that community of interest is the fundamental principle underlying the very system of representation which the hon. member advocated so strongly, namely the proportional system.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes; but a totally different community of interest to that which you advocate.

The PREMIER: Not at all. Will the hon. member say that if the Collie district and the Sussex district were knocked into one and given two members that they would not have exactly the same representation under the proportional system as they have to-day?

Mr. Scaddan: I do not know.

The PREMIER: The figures show it; they would exactly have the same representation as to-day, but community of interest would be clearly demarked between the two representatives. I venture to say that the Clan Wilson would still represent the new electorate. There is much to be said in favour of the proportional system the leader of the Opposition was good enough to tell us about the other evening; but it has to be remembered it is only on its trial now so far as Australia is concerned and the older countries of Europe. A British Royal Commission which sat this year and went into all the different systems that it could possibly hear of, could not recommend it; but pronounced in favour of our preferential voting for single-member constituencies. That was of course to give absolute majority representation in the single constituencies.

Mr. Scaddan: But it does not give absolute majority representation in Parliament.

The PREMIER: No system will do that. I admit at once that the proportional system has been tried at one general election in Tasmania, and I believe it has been tried with very excellent results. The hon. member will remember that some three years ago the ex-Attorney General of this Government brought in an Electoral Bill to provide among other things for this proportional representation, or for a grouping of electors with a view

to proportional representation in certain portions of the State.

Mr. Scaddan: Yes, in certain portions of the State only.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows it was dropped at the time. The report of the select committee that sat upon the Bill was to the effect that we should make much fuller and deeper inquiries into the system before we thought of changing and adopting proportional representation in Western Australia. They thought that the subject was well worthy of inquiry, but that it was too big a subject to hastily decide on, and they recommended the House to let it stand over. By the British House of Commons a Royal Commission was appointed which sat this year, and even that august body have not been able to come to a conclusion that they could recommend it. So the leader of the Opposition will see at once that perhaps we ought to be cautious, although I admit again there is much to be said for the system, and so far as I am concerned I am rather enamoured of it from what I have read of it and from what I know of it; still we ought to be cautious before we launch out on a system of this description and abolish the system under which we are now governed. The hon. member characterised the Sussex electorate, or the re-arrangement of the boundaries of it, as barefaced gerrymandering.

Mr. Troy: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And he went on shortly afterwards to admit that it gave a safe Labour seat in the Collie electorate.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Thank you for nothing.

The PREMIER: I do not know about "thank you for nothing." I have the figures of the last general election before me, and I find that my hon. namesake, Mr. A. A. Wilson, polled 1039 votes against his opponent's 985; in other words he had a majority of 54 out of 2,024 formal votes polled, not a very large majority. I had a bigger one than that in Sussex with a much smaller poll. I do not think the member for Collie, if appealed to, would consider that his seat was very safe at the time.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: I was only a colt then.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is still a colt. If what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and if the remarks of the leader of the Opposition are applicable to the electorate of Sussex, then surely they can be applied to the member for Collie and his electorate of Collie with more force. Take the figures which the hon. member gave to the House. Here we have in the Collie district Brookhampton which has been removed from Collie. It gave 62 votes for the Ministerial candidate in opposition to the present member, and the present member polled only three votes.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: I never went down there.

The PREMIER: Neither did I go to Kurrup Landing, where I got one vote. That is the mistake we both made on that occasion. Nevertheless the figures apply equally to the hon. member as they apply to me. Now we have generously proposed to relieve the hon. member of those 62 Opposition votes so far as he is concerned.

Mr. Troy: Where have you put them?

The PREMIER: Put them in the Sussex electorate of course. Now take Donnybrook. There were 199 votes cast against the hon. member, and the hon. member only secured 71. We propose to relieve him of these votes against him. Take Preston. There were 57 cast against the hon. member and 28 in his favour, just as glaring as the figures the hon. member quoted so far as Sussex was concerned. There were 216 votes cast in these three places against the hon. member at the last general election, and these have been removed to the Sussex electorate, so that he is that much to the good. What is the position in regard to Sussex. I need not worry hon. members with the details which the leader of the Opposition gave us with regard to the different polling places, except to point out that the people at Flinders Bay are nomadic in character. The hon. member declared that I was removing 281 votes that were opposed to me and putting them into Collie. Surely there can-

not be any injustice in a readjustment of the boundaries of an electorate, which will take 216 of my opponent's votes and give 221 to my opponent in the Collie district.

Mr. Scaddan: Nearly 500 votes.

The PREMIER: It makes this difference. Collie has lost by the rearrangement 318 Ministerial supporters and 102 Opposition, equalling 420 altogether, or a net loss of 216 Ministerial votes. In other words 216 votes opposed to the present member have been taken away from him. Sussex has lost 61 Ministerial votes and 282 Opposition, or a net loss of 221 Opposition votes; therefore it is clear that Sussex has gained in strength 216 votes from the Ministerial point of view, while Collie has gained 221 from the Opposition point of view. In fact the gain, so far as parties are concerned, is in favour of Collie as against Sussex.

Mr. Holman: You have been thinking of the other fellow all the while.

The PREMIER: That is very evident. How can an action of this sort be classed as gerrymandering, which gives your opponent something which he has not got?

Mr. Swan: Gerrymandering is a polite name for it.

The PREMIER: Hon. members do not like to have the position put in plain language. Let me point out what we should have done had we wished to gerrymander, as I understand the term as explained by the leader of the Opposition. I understand that the term means to re-arrange boundaries so that opponents become of no avail and so that they shall always be out-voted. That is not what I have done. Had I wished to do that I would have cut these constituencies into long strips taking the sawmills en route, and taking care that the agricultural voters out-voted the workers, and thus obliterated Forrest and Collie.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You could not do it.

The PREMIER: Why could I not do it? The thing was practicable. I would have obliterated Forrest and Collie, and thus I would have ignored their community of interests.

Mr. Heitmann: Did you think of Collie when you gave Ewing a map and asked him to map out a safe seat?

The PREMIER: I did nothing of the kind.

Mr. Heitmann: Then the Government did.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition cleverly tries to draw a red herring across the trail. He attacks the system of relative majorities and pronounces in favour of the proportional system. We do not propose to alter our present system. The question we have to consider to-day is the redistribution of seats or the re-arrangement of boundaries, which perhaps is the better term, and to make the representation as far as we can more just and more equitable from the community of interests point of view and also from the population point of view. Even if we had the proportional system adopted later on, or at the present time, we would still require redistribution of seats. I freely admit, as I said before, that this system which the leader of the Opposition advocates, is worthy of our most serious consideration, but I do not think it should be the foundation of our discussion at the present time, or that it should be allowed to interfere with the passage of this measure in any shape or form. I admit that the scheme is based on a diversity of considerations, and if it is examined in the light of one principle only then it cannot prove satisfactory in every part. The main principle of the Bill is a graduated scale of quota governed by community of interests, by the density of population, and by the proximity to the seat of Government and also taking into consideration—

Mr. Scaddan: No, no.

The PREMIER: Yes, yes; and taking into consideration the immediate prospects of an increase or a decrease of the electors. That is the basis upon which this Bill has been drafted, and as has been clearly outlined by the Attorney General.

Mr. Scaddan: One word "gerrymandering."

The PREMIER: The Attorney General gave ample reasons for the variations of quota allowed to each group of electorates. It has been stated that community

of interests has never, in a well considered scheme, been the governing factor, and the leader of the Opposition made as much of this as possible. Let me point out that both in the Commonwealth Act and in the Queensland Bill which the hon. member referred to, this community of interests is a consideration which is placed in the first rank. The hon. member will see, if he has a copy of the Commonwealth Act before him, that it is set out in Section 16 that in making any redistribution of seats into divisions the Commissioner shall give due consideration—(a) the very first thing, to community or diversity of interests; that is the first principle. Then they give means of communication, physical features, existing boundaries, and all divisions and boundaries of State electorates. The Queensland Bill which the hon. member referred to is worded in an exactly similar way to the Commonwealth Bill.

Mr. Scaddan: Hardly, but it is near enough.

The PREMIER: So that we have plenty of precedents for the basis upon which we have drafted our measure, no matter what hon. members may think about it or how individual members may feel aggrieved.

Mr. Angwin: What do the people think?

Mr. Murphy: What about the Fremantle Council?

Mr. Angwin: They are against it.

Mr. Murphy: They did not say so. What did they do last night?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must not continue interjecting.

The PREMIER: A comparison has been made between the Swan and North Perth and the Boulder electorates, detrimental to the Bill. It has been stated that the Swan is a district in the metropolitan area because it adjoins North Perth. It is absurd to put forward a contention of that sort. Swan is a purely rural constituency under this Bill whereas North Perth is purely a central metropolitan constituency; and if you are going to make electorates which adjoin all one class, where will you get the line of demarcation? There must be a line between towns with a congested population

and the country immediately adjoining, and it would be as easy to argue that any of the electorates on the Great Southern railway were metropolitan in their character as to argue that the Swan is of the same character as the North Perth electorate. On the other hand there is no analogy between the Swan and the Boulder electorates. Boulder is purely a mining electorate, and in that respect Boulder has community of interests in contradistinction to the Swan. Doubt has been cast upon the probable future increases in the populations of the agricultural districts. The hon. member has taken us to task for giving a quota which is somewhat less than the outlying mining districts and considerably less than the metropolitan districts, and doubt has been cast as to the number of electors by which these agricultural electorates will increase in the near future. Surely I may be pardoned for pointing out that sufficient justification for this anticipation of increase in our agricultural centres is to be found in the large number of settlers who are going on the land with their families and the number of immigrants who are arriving month by month and those who are booked for transit from the old country during the next year. When one considers the thousands who are already booked for agricultural pursuits it seems to me that there can be no doubt whatever that we may look forward to a considerable increase in the electoral population of our agricultural districts within the next twelve months or two years.

Mr. Bolton: And none for the others?

The PREMIER: Of course, but nothing like to the same extent. The leader of the Opposition attempts to bolster up his condemnation of this Bill by making a comparison between the total mining and timber electorates, sixteen in number, with the fifteen purely agricultural electorates, and he argued that to bring up the quota of the latter would require an additional 15,000 electors representing from 35,000 to 40,000 inhabitants. To be just he ought to have taken in the densely populated Golden Mile electorates, he should also have included the metropolitan area



with the agricultural seats, which was not done, or he should have excluded the four Golden Mile electorates. The comparison would then have worked out as follows:—The average for the nine outside mining districts is 2,250 electors, and the average for the 15 purely agricultural districts is 1,850 electors, the former representing a total of 20,270 electors and the latter 27,800 electors.

Mr. Scaddan: I did include the gold mining electorates; I included all the gold mining constituencies, 13 in number.

The PREMIER: I have the total here. The mining districts outside the Golden Mile which under the Redistribution of Seats scheme have been allotted a somewhat higher quota than the purely agricultural districts, number nine, namely, Coolgardie, Kanowna, Menzies, Leonora, Mount Margaret, Yilgarn, Cue, Mount Magnet, and the Murchison. They have been given a quota of 2,250 or a total enrolment of 20,270. The 15 purely agricultural districts have a quota of 1,850 and an enrolment of 27,800. To raise the quota of the 15 agricultural districts from 1,850 to 2,250, to be equal to the outside mining electorates, would require an increase of electoral strength of only 6,000, which, in view of the increase of settlement and immigration, may be confidently anticipated before the new Parliament has run its allotted span. The new scheme does not contemplate an equal quota for the purely agricultural district and the Golden Mile, and the requisite increase of the agricultural population as set down by the leader of the Opposition has come down from 35,000 or 40,000 to 12,000 or 15,000. Therefore it will be seen that the hon. member misled this House.

Mr. Scaddan: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to explain that it is the Premier who is misleading the House. I referred to the mining constituencies, 13 in number, and pointed out that the agricultural constituencies, 15 in number, would require an increase of 35,000 to 40,000 to bring their quota up to that for the goldfields constituencies as a whole.

The PREMIER: Then I say that the hon. member misled the House, unintentionally, of course, and gave an unfair

comparison, because he included the Golden Mile in comparing the mining constituencies with the agricultural constituencies but left out the metropolitan area. The comparison is not worth anything unless it includes or excludes both centres of population; therefore, I say the hon. member gave a misleading comparison and misled the House. As I have just pointed out, it does not require an increased population of 35,000 to 40,000 to bring the quota of the agricultural districts up to that of the outside mining districts.

Mr. Scaddan: I said the mining districts as a whole.

The PREMIER: Well, the comparison is not worth a halfpenny. Is it too much to expect that the agricultural population, which extends from the Murchison river in the far north to Albany and Cape Leeuwin in the south, will increase by 12,000 or 15,000 in a few years, men, women and children? Why, in three months, from October to January, or four months at the outside, we shall have introduced into the State 3,229 agricultural immigrants, mostly adults.

Mr. Holman: They are not agricultural immigrants; that is incorrect.

The PREMIER: It is not incorrect; the great percentage of these people are settling in the agricultural districts. These immigrants—and they do not include those from the Eastern States of whom we are getting a few—will be augmented by those nominated by relatives and friends already settled on the land. These people are arriving at the present time, as I pointed out some time back, at the rate of 40 or 50 per week, and that shows at once that we may expect a large additional accession of population to these agricultural districts which we cannot expect in the mining districts and other parts of the State, at any rate to the same extent. The only argument for the retention of the two goldfields seats that are proposed to be taken away is that they have had them up to the present. I do not care what basis is taken, put it on any basis, the mining and timber districts are only entitled to 16 members, the number provided for them in this Bill.

Mr. Bath: Absolutely wrong.

The PREMIER: That is the number that we propose to give them. On an electoral population basis they could only secure 16 members.

Mr. Bath: They could secure 20 members.

The PREMIER: If we take the Queensland and Commonwealth percentage of variation as between the densely populated centres and sparsely populated districts, 20 per cent. above and 20 per cent. below, they could only claim 15 seats. If taken on an absolute population basis, men, women and children, who live in that portion of the country—

Mr. Collier: Oh yes, men, women, and children.

The PREMIER: Does not the hon. member approve of women and children?

Mr. Collier: Yes.

The PREMIER: I should be sorry to have the hon. member sneering at them. Surely they are entitled to consideration.

Mr. Collier: Oh, do not be ridiculous.

The PREMIER: I advise the hon. member to treat women and children with respect. I repeat that on an absolute population basis, men, women, and children, not trade unionists, we find that the metropolitan area, including the suburbs and Fremantle, with a population of 104,000 would receive 18 members; the agricultural, seaports, and pastoral, with 96,800 people, would be entitled to 17 members; and the mining districts, including Collie, and the timber industry, with a population of 83,000, would be entitled to 15 members, not 18 as at the present time. Now, let us see exactly how this matter will pan out, because the member for Brown Hill has disputed the figures I gave, and said that the mining and timber industries would be entitled to 20 members. How would it pan out on an electoral population basis as compared with the present Bill? This is a statement showing the number of seats that can be claimed by the various sections of the State on the supposition that the Commonwealth or Queensland provision was adhered to, namely, the population quota with an allowance of 20 per cent. over or under.

On a purely electoral population basis the following would be the result:—The metropolitan and Fremantle, urban and residential suburban districts, with a present electoral strength of 50,657, would return 18.6 members.

Mr. Seaddan: What is the quota you are taking?

The PREMIER: I am taking the proportion; divide the total number by 18 and it will give 2,800. Then take the present five electorates on the Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields, with a present electoral strength of 16,988, and they would return only 6.3 members. The outside mining districts and timber areas with a present electoral strength of 27,533, would return 10.1 members, and the outports, agricultural and pastoral districts, with a present electoral strength of 40,736, would return 15 members, a total of 50 members representing a quota of 2,718. Then take the comparison between the present representation, and representation purely on a population basis, as above set out, and also as compared with the proposed representation under the Redistribution of Seats Bill, and we find the following:—The metropolitan and Fremantle urban and residential suburban districts have a present representation of 13 members. On an electoral population basis they would be entitled to 19 members, and it is proposed to give them 12. The present five electorates on the Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields and the outside mining districts and timber areas have 18 members, on an electoral population basis they would be entitled to 16 members, and it is proposed to give them 16 members. The outports, agricultural, and pastoral districts, with a present representation of 19 members would be entitled on an electoral population basis to 15 members.

Mr. Underwood: You are talking rubbish.

The PREMIER: The hon. member need not sit and listen to it; there are plenty of comfortable seats outside in the corridor, and if he goes there and gets a bit of ice he may be able to keep

himself cool. I was saying that they would be entitled on an electoral population basis to 15 members, and we propose to give them 22. Now if the metropolitan area and the densely populated Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields were allocated a quota 20 per cent. above the average, that is 2,718 plus 20 per cent., equaling 3,262, and the outside mining districts and timber districts were placed on the quota, namely 2,718, whilst the outports and agricultural and pastoral districts were given a quota 20 per cent. below the average, namely, 2,718 less 20 per cent., equalling 2,174, the result would be as follows:—

Mr. Scaddan: Why do you place the mining districts on the quota and the agricultural districts below it?

The PREMIER: Because of the sparse settlement, scattered population and rapid increase which we expect in the agricultural districts. On that basis the results would be as follows:—The Metropolitan and Fremantle urban and residential suburban districts with an electoral enrolment of 50,657 would have a quota of 3,262, which is 20 per cent. above the average, and they would get 16 members, exactly the same as we are giving them.

Mr. Bolton: You are only giving them 12.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is right. They would get 16 and we are giving them 12. The present five electorates on the Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields, with an enrolment of 16,988, would have a quota of 3,262, again 20 per cent. above the average, and would be entitled to five members. The outside mining districts and timber areas, with an enrolment of 27,533 electors and a quota of 2,718, which is the average, would get 10 members, so that the present mining districts, including timber, under this system, and with this percentage of increase and decrease of course, would be entitled to only 15 members as against the 16 they are given.

Mr. Scaddan: Will you tell me the quota you are giving to the agricultural districts?

The PREMIER: I have not got it worked out. The goldfields are getting the quota to which they are entitled. The

outports, agricultural and pastoral districts with an enrolment of 40,736 electors and a quota of 2,174, or 20 per cent. below the average, would get a representation of 19 members as against the 22 members which it is proposed to give them. That is the position so far as this 20 per cent. business is concerned. If, on the other hand, the metropolitan area is placed on the highest quota, namely, 3,262, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields on a quota 10 per cent. above the average, namely, 2,718 plus 10 per cent., equalling 2,990, the outside mining districts and timber at the average quota 2,718, the ports and agricultural constituencies at 10 per cent. lower than the average quota, namely, 2,718, less 10 per cent., equalling 2,440, and the northern pastoral districts at 20 per cent. lower than the quota, namely, 2,718 less 20 per cent., equalling 2,174, the result will be as follows:—The Metropolitan and Fremantle, urban and residential suburban districts would have 16 members as against 12. The present five electorates, Kalgoorlie and Boulder fields, would have six members as against five. The outside mining districts and timber would have 10 members; the ports and agricultural districts 16 members, and pastoral would have two members, making a total of 50. I'll have to admit, in all these tables has been counted as a mining district.

Mr. Bolton: What about Roebourne?

Mr. Scaddan: It all works out at 16 seats on the quota.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must look at the dense population in the metropolitan area. It is argued that we are gerrymandering the seats to suit our own convenience.

Mr. Scaddan: You arranged it to defeat adult suffrage.

The PREMIER: Not at all. The hon. member would not like the great North-West, with its varied industries and wide interests, to be placed on the same basis as Perth and Kalgoorlie. It is absurd. Take the Northern Territory of South Australia, a democratic country always in the vanguard of democratic principles and movements; there are two representatives of the great Northern Territory out

of a House of 41 members, and I do not suppose there are 500 electors in the Northern Territory of South Australia apart from Chinamen.

Mr. Scaddan: You do not know what you are talking about.

The PREMIER: Yes, I do; the hon. member does not.

Mr. Scaddan: I know there are more than that.

The PREMIER: When I was there a few years ago not many could be seen. The leader of the Opposition pleads for the Queensland system, which I have shown can only give the goldfields, mining, and timber centres 16 members such as we propose under the Bill.

Mr. Bath: That is wrong, because the Kalgoorlie seats would get consideration on that quota.

The PREMIER: No, they would not.

Mr. Bath: But they do in New South Wales and Queensland.

The PREMIER: Why should Kalgoorlie and Boulder, the Golden Mile, have any difference on the basis of representation from the metropolitan area?

Mr. Bath: Because they are so far from the seat of Government.

Mr. Bolton: What about the farming constituencies

The PREMIER: The farming communities are rising year by year, and in a short time, 12 months or two years, they will be far ahead of what they are to-day.

Mr. Bolton: But, that is only assumption.

The PREMIER: It is absolute fact; I have quoted the figures. I have shown that the charge of scandalous treatment to the goldfields cannot be sustained.

Mr. Walker: Can be.

The PREMIER: And that the statement that the Government are out to "dish their opponents" is a fallacy of the fervid imagination of those who make the charge. It must be obvious to any reasonable men that the goldfields are getting all they are entitled to, even on an absolutely electoral population basis, and more than they are entitled to on a population basis itself, and they, at any rate, have no good grounds for complaint against the Bill. As regards the North-

West, who will say that the North-West of this great State should be left with exactly the same measure of representation as their white population represents? Who will say that the vast area and extensive industries controlled by the handful of white people numbering, all in all, so far as the electoral rolls are concerned, about 5,000—

Mr. Scaddan: That is the hard-shell Tory gag you are giving us.

The PREMIER: Shall go without the adequate representation which has been extended to similar portions of the Empire in all the Parliaments controlling the different portions of that Empire. To my mind, we would not be justified in passing over the interests of our North-West portion of the State with a light hand and saying they were only to have the amount of actual representation according to population, and that would be slightly under two, with an area of about one-third at least, if not more, of the whole of the State, with those central communities such as the Broome district, with its pearling industry, the Kimberleys, with the cattle industry, and Roebourne, with its sheep and wool industry, and Pilbara, with its mining industry; these are all centres subsisting on their own individual efforts, self-contained and self-controlled; they are just as much entitled to special representation as a small State is entitled to special representation in the Senate of the Commonwealth at the present time. And, let me say in conclusion, it has been recognised in all the States of the Commonwealth that the outlying portions should have special consideration. That has been realised in Queensland as far as the Northern Territory is concerned, it has been recognised in New South Wales so far as its Western territory is concerned, and as I have pointed out it has been realised and recognised in no uncertain manner so far as South Australia is concerned, that the Northern Territory, which is nothing like as important as ours in Western Australia, should have the special representation of two members in a House of 41 members. I think I have shown that the gerrymandering charge is more an electioneering cry than

anything else, a charge made for discrediting the measure before the people of the country, and to endeavour if possible to bring condemnation on the heads of the Government, who are desirous, no matter what the Opposition may say, of placing before the House a just and reasonable, and fair measure of redistribution of seats and alteration of boundaries of the electorates of the State.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): The famous Johnson, literary man, well known in English circles, once declared that patriotism was the last refuge of scoundrels, and I think if he had been present to-day he would have said that redistribution of seats was the last refuge of discredited politicians. Undoubtedly this proposal has been conceived in darkness. The secrecy observed, the violation of every principle of public policy, showed, or rather indicated to members on this side, that the scheme when at last submitted to the House and the people that it would give ample evidence that it violated every principle of equity. The Attorney General in the course of his remarks said that in comparing this proposal with the redistribution of 1903, that it made a more equitable apportionment of the representation of the people in Parliament. As a matter of fact if any member will take the trouble to study the figures of the distribution of electorates prior to 1903 with the measure as it was finally passed, he will find that it made a very vital difference, and was a very great step towards representation on a more equitable basis. This proposition which is now before us is a reversion to the scandalous condition of things which existed prior to 1903, and which the Attorney General so roundly complained about while that measure was under discussion. The Attorney General declared that he had no intention on behalf of the Government of exalting political theories into the position of master. But, throughout this scheme—and there is no difficulty in any member becoming convinced of the fact—there is one theory which has been the dominant factor in the consummation of this scheme, and it is that this so-called redistribution of seats should be made the

engine by which the present Government can stave off defeat at the forthcoming elections. As the result of the last general elections, owing to the circumstance that our distribution even under existing circumstances is not equitable, 22 members on this side of the House represent a majority of the electors who cast their votes, whilst 28 on the Ministerial side represent a minority of those electors. That is the position as the result of the last general election. Members on this side of the House represent a majority of those who cast their votes at the last general election, and now the proposition of the Attorney General and the Government is, not to rectify that condition of things, not to ensure that if a majority of the electors cast their votes for a certain party or certain principles, the party advocating those principles shall have a majority of representation, but rather to make the position even worse, and to provide under this redistribution, as I can conclusively prove, that a minority, a much smaller minority, shall still be able to retain a majority of representation. Now I ask if a condition of things such as that can be characterised as an equitable scheme of redistribution? But that is the theory which dominates the Government in their present redistribution proposal. It is not surprising, therefore, that with a scheme such as this in view, with the object of staving off the inevitable defeat staring them in the face, they should resort to something in the nature of a secret conspiracy, that this Bill presuming to follow certain well-defined lines should follow no other lines than that it should seek to defeat us by unfair, underground engineering rather than by a straight-out battle at the electoral polls. As showing that there has been no desire for a redistribution approaching to equity, we have had no attempt made by the Attorney General to secure a correct census of the electors immediately preceding this Bill. It is true that in one or two electorates where they knew there was a probability of increases a census was taken, but hon. members are not in possession of any information which would give them an accurate idea of the actual number of electors in the electorates throughout the whole State

just prior to the introduction of this measure. I assert—and it is a practice followed elsewhere, a practice which was followed in 1903—an electoral census should precede a redistribution of seats, so that at the very outset members might have an accurate knowledge of the number of electors. But that has been absolutely neglected, because if the information had been available the whole plan of the Government would have been exploded. For instance, in the Brown Hill electorate there were at the end of June over 3,000 electors, while to-day they are shown as 2,500. As a matter of fact there has been an increase in the number of electors, notwithstanding which we are asked to accept information which shows a decrease of 500. That is one sample of the inaccurate basis on which we are asked to discuss the measure.

Mr. Foulkes: How do you know there has not been a decrease of 500?

Mr. BATH: Because there were 3,000 in the electorate at the end of June, and there has been an accession of population, whilst many have since attained the age of 21. So there are only perhaps ten or a dozen required to make an increase of 500 more than stated in the Bill. If there had been any desire to remove the anomalies which exist, it could be done with a much nearer approach to equity by a readjustment of boundaries in each group as set down by the Attorney General. For instance, if we took the metropolitan area including Perth, the metropolitan-suburban, and the Fremantle seats, then by shifting the boundaries of North Fremantle further up the line, and bringing into that electorate an area which is undoubtedly allied in every way with the Port, in business connections and industrial connections, and by a re-arrangement of North Perth so as to reduce the quota, we could still retain the same number of seats in the metropolitan area, including Fremantle, and each of these electorates would still have 3,000 electors. But there was a Labour constituency to be struck out, and so without any attempt to readjust the boundaries they struck out the North Fremantle seat.

Mr. Bolton: It is not struck out yet.

Mr. BATH: Then again there might have been a slight readjustment between the boundaries of Ivanhoe and Hannans, and an alteration of boundaries which could very easily be effected and which would have meant retaining the same number of seats as at present while there would have been a quota of 3,400 electors. The scattered mining seats would have had a quota of 2,200 electors, the ports and country towns a quota of 2,500 electors, the agricultural districts a quota of 2,100 electors, and the North-West a quota of 1,140 electors. Under that scheme of adjustment within the groups as specified by the Attorney General, the North-West would still have had by far the lowest quota, while the agricultural districts would have been the second lowest and would have had room to expand before they had anything like the quota of the scattered mining districts. But that was not the object. The express object of the Bill was to increase the quotas of Opposition members and to decrease the quotas of Ministerial members without regard to the nature of the constituencies, without regard to the extent of the electorate, without regard to its distance from the port—merely to take an electorate, and because it is Opposition to increase its quota, and to take a Ministerial electorate and decrease its quota. I can prove that by taking the details of this redistribution for the whole number of the electorates. This is one method resorted to by the Government in trying to secure the return of a Ministerial party representing the minority of electors. Another is by the manipulation of the boundaries of individual electorates for the purpose of cutting out votes antagonistic to the Government. These are the two main ideas, namely to put a big disparity between the quotas of the Ministerial and of the Opposition electorates, and in the second place to manipulate the boundaries in such a way as to cut out voters regarded as inimical to the present Government. These are the two methods which undoubtedly characterise this scheme as gerrymandering in the strongest American sense of the word. In order to put through a scandalous scheme of this character it is necessary

for anyone in charge of such a Bill to put forward as plausible a form of pleading as possible when introducing it, to make it appear somewhat less scandalous than it actually is; and so we have the Attorney General talking grandly of community of interests, potentialities of districts, and the extent of districts, and their distance from the seat of Government. But it is a remarkable thing, and it runs throughout the whole scheme, that community of interests is only utilised where it secures the return of the Premier. In another electorate where it is not necessary in order to secure the seat of a Ministerial supporter, community of interests is disregarded. Then again where it is necessary to create electorates in the Midland district with only 1,500 voters, we have much from the Minister about the great potentialities of the district. Where it is necessary to cut out a Labour constituency with even greater potentialities there is no mention whatever of the word. And so with scattered goldfields and agricultural districts we have the Minister drawing a travesty of the truth such as that scattered mining districts are not entitled to the same consideration as scattered agricultural districts because, as he tells us, in the scattered mining districts we have centres of population, whereas in the agricultural districts the electors are isolated on farms. The Minister for Mines in Cabinet council could have repudiated that, because he knows it is not the case. The Minister for Mines could have told his colleagues that the man isolated on the farms in the agricultural districts is paralleled by the isolated prospector in the scattered mining districts. And whilst we have small towns in the scattered mining districts there are only a few instances in which they enjoy the same opportunities, the same means of communication as are enjoyed by the towns in the agricultural districts. Because, after all, the bulk of the electors in the agricultural electorates, along the Great Southern line for instance, have towns which, so far as the means of convenience and facilities are concerned, rival the Kalgoorlie area on the goldfields—towns like York, Beverley, Pingelly, Narrogin, and Katanning. All

these are compact towns, and where there are outlying centres they are, in most instances, connected by spur lines of railway, and where at present they are not connected, in a short time they will be. So these districts enjoy much greater facilities and are less entitled to consideration than are the scattered mining districts, which are very often remote from the railway line, and by reason of the cost of locomotion remote from all bigger centres. And apart from that, there are the individual prospectors or small groups who are entirely isolated from even those towns which for their part are remote from the railway line. So any comparison, based on accurate information—and if the Attorney General had not that accurate information he could have procured it—would prove to the Attorney General that the comparison he made appear disadvantageous to the agricultural districts is really advantageous to them, because owing to their greater facilities and greater compactness and their comparative nearness to the centres of population they are less entitled to consideration than the scattered mining districts. Then we had the statement as to the potentialities of the Midland districts to account for the very low quota of those proposed electorates, a quota of less than 1,500. But we heard nothing from the Minister as to the potentialities of the Dundas district. We have hundreds of settlers taking up the fertile lands which exist down there, already at work upon them and building up what undoubtedly will be a populous agricultural district, on lands admitted by the Lands officers to be some of the finest wheat growing land in Western Australia. But the Minister had no concern for that consideration. Although this development is going on in the Dundas district to-day, and although apart from this Dundas is a very extensive and scattered electorate, we find the Minister, without any compunction whatever, wiping it off the list. Now what is the result? We find even after this manipulation has taken place, even although the Minister tried to assure us the distribution as it exists at the present time is inequitable, that in a number of instances the Minis-

ter has accentuated it under the redistribution we have now before us. We are told as a justification for the carving out, for instance, of Collie and Sussex electorates that it is entirely because the Government are desirous of securing community of interests, but I know of no State in the world where that horse has been more ridden to death than it has been in this instance. I do not believe that one could search through the electoral boundaries of any country enjoying Parliamentary institutions throughout the whole world and find electorates carved out as Sussex and Collie are under this scheme. The very appearance of them indicate that the Minister, with his tongue in his cheek, and with the election results of the last campaign at his right hand, carved them out to secure the return of the Premier regardless of any other consideration. We are told that by acquiescing in this we secure on our behalf a safe Labour seat in Collie; but I say it is just as objectionable—gerrymandering is just as objectionable if it secures a safe seat for one party in order that it may secure the return of another member on the other side. We want a fair distribution, one that will give consideration as far as possible to some of the considerations advanced by the Attorney General, but at the same time will produce electorates as compact as possible, the least complicated so far as their boundaries are concerned; because it has to be remembered that these constituencies have to be contested, and what an absurdity it is to argue that the miner or business man at Collie shall be linked with the lighthouse-keeper at Cape Leuwin!

Mr. Troy: Or farmers at Nannup.

Mr. BATH: It makes it impossible for the member to deal with such a constituency; and when such a constituency is the product of gerrymandering, it should receive the opposition of every member who likes honest, straightforward politics. So far from securing community of interest in these centres, the action taken by the Government is more calculated to create friction; because, as a matter of fact, the port of Busselton is very largely dependent upon the timber business in that area. The jetty at Busselton was extended on

the strength of the probable development of the timber industry in that district. At least that was the chief argument advanced by the Premier when submitting the loan proposal for the extension. And not only the people of Busselton, but the farmers, whom the Premier speaks of, and the settlers are dependent on these workers in the timber industry for their market; they sell to them their produce; and to-day the Premier asks us to acquiesce in the position which practically makes the settler say, "You are good enough to live in close proximity to; you are good enough to buy our produce; but you are not good enough to vote in the same electorate with us." A proposition such as that, standing out as it does from the Premier's remarks, is likely to create friction which ought not to exist in a centre of that kind. These people have interests which are bound up indissolubly, and the position is not as the Premier tried to make us believe it was. The farmers and the timber workers are not two bodies at enmity. There are bonds of sympathy between them, and moreover every year they are beginning to think alike that in the same political principles the well-being of both parties exists.

Mr. Heitmann: Lots of farmers' sons work in the timber mills.

Mr. BATH: But community of interest is forgotten when we come to the Geraldton electorate. Without any regard to the question of community of interest we find there they immediately appropriate to the port, to what is a business and industrial centre, a part of the farming district of Greenough, and that particular part in which I understand the member for Geraldton spent about ten years. This part is appropriated to Geraldton with a view to balancing, if possible, the large vote given in that district for Labour principles and to try as far as possible to introduce what they consider a conservative element in order that the seat of the Ministerial supporter may be preserved.

The Attorney General: It was to bring up the quota for Geraldton.

Mr. BATH: Then we find as this would leave Greenough a very small seat with a small number of electors, the Attorney General still goes on his way, evi-



dently oblivious to community of interest, and appropriates some mining electors from the electorate of the member for Mount Magnet to bring up the quota. Community of interest for Sussex, but not community of interest for Geraldton and Greenough. It shows how far this boasted community of interest has actuated the Government when it was necessary to try to defeat members of the Opposition by this underhand means. Then let us take the Katanning electorate. Here there was no question of population or quota, but down there there is a centre called Woodanilling, practically allied to Katanning, with Katanning as its market town, identified with Katanning in every way and only about ten or twelve miles away. During the recent elections it was found that there was a development of democratic opinion in that centre; they recorded in favour of the Labour candidates at the recent Federal election a slight majority of votes, or an equality of votes; and we find Woodanilling, although allied to Katanning, is dragged away to Wagin. Where does community of interest come in there? It is evidently forgotten in order to wipe out this little hot bed of democratic sentiment from the Katanning electorate. Then take the Nelson electorate. A sawmill which largely contributes to the business of the town of Greenbushes, which is only situated about a mile from the town, which is allied to it in every way by business connections, is wrested away from Greenbushes and placed in the Collie electorate and allied with the town of Collie 60 or 70 miles away. Here is evidence, glaring evidence, of the way in which Ministers have neglected every consideration but an attempt to secure constituencies for their supporters by coolly cutting-out any electors who in past elections have displayed democratic sympathies. We are told that because the Kalgoorlie electorates are compact therefore they must have the same quota as the metropolitan seats, although they are 400 miles away, remote from the seat of Government and have difficulty, owing to that distance, in having their wants properly attended to. Although they must have the same quota as the metropolitan seats

and lose a member in so doing, yet we find that Northam, which is also under this scheme a compact agricultural town, practically equal to Kalgoorlie so far as enjoyment of the conveniences of life are concerned, and situated only 66 miles from Perth, must have a quota of only 2,800. Now, if there is any justification for saying the Kalgoorlie electorates should have a quota of 4,250, equal to the metropolitan constituencies then there is even greater justification for saying that Northam should have the same quota, but we find that because Northam happens to be represented by a Ministerial supporter it must needs only have a quota of 2,800. What is the result of this redistribution? We find that the four Perth seats have an average quota of 4,500, the metropolitan-suburban seats have an average quota of 4,250, Collie and Forrest, that is the coal and timber seats, have an average quota of 2,800, the port and outports have an average quota of 2,400, the agricultural seats have an average quota of 1,853, and the North-West constituencies have an average quota of 1,225. Why should there be any reason for a less quota being allotted to the ports than is allotted to the so-called compact goldfields electorates? They are compact centres having two means of communication with the capital, and are closer in nearly every instance to the capital than are the goldfields seats, yet they are permitted to remain with a much reduced quota in comparison with that of the goldfields constituencies. The Premier has argued that there will be no justification whatever for in any way reducing the representation of the North-West, but I say there is no justification for retaining an electorate like Roebourne with only 700 electors while at the same time the metropolitan constituencies have an average of 4,500. Because after all the difficulty is not so much the question of the number of representatives: it is rather the question of the need for some other means of government in order that their wants in the North may be more properly attended to. I undertake to

say that if the representation of the North were doubled it would not affect the difficulties and disabilities under which the North labours. If we are to remedy that, it is not by a redistribution of seats such as this, it is rather by a system of local government, by having there a local body with large powers, or a local commissioner with large powers with the right to control a stated sum of expenditure, so that instead of all these matters having to come to the centre with all the delays that are occasioned thereby, they can be promptly met and the development of the North-West not impeded owing to the long distance from the metropolis.

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

Mr. BATH: Before I leave this question of what I consider the more effective method of meeting the requirements, I have only to say that I am fully convinced in my own mind that if the North-West had the chance to be represented by three Labour members, and one Ministerialist, instead of as at present one Labour member and three Ministerialists, the Government would have been firmly convinced of the need for redistribution in that area, and the necessity to cut down the seats. It is also significant that even where we are led to understand that the Government have removed anomalies within certain groups by bringing constituencies more into line with one another in regard to the number of electors, that in every group, even now with the proposed redistribution submitted by the Government, the seat which contains the greatest number of electors, is always the seat represented by a Labour member. Take the Perth constituencies for instance. One seat, the North Perth seat, has the greatest number of electors in that group, and it is represented by a Labour member. In the Metropolitan Suburban, Guildford which is represented by a Labour member, has the largest number of electors; take also the outports and we will find precisely the same thing obtains there. Even after the allocation the Government cannot resist the temptation to do something

unfair to Opposition members in order to secure their own ends. It is not necessary, however, to go to the South-West in order to secure instances of these inequalities. If we take the constituencies represented by Ministers occupying the Treasury bench, and if we exclude the populous metropolitan constituency of Subiaco we find that five Ministers represent constituencies in each of which there is an average of 1,700 electors, so that these five Ministers will only represent electors in five electorates equal to those contained in two other electorates either in the Kalgoorlie district or the metropolitan district. This also is in evidence in connection with the constituencies in the South-West. Take Forrest and Collie; both of these under the amended form will be widely scattered constituencies with large areas, and present difficulties with regard to travelling through them, yet they are left with an average of 2,700 electors while the agricultural constituencies presenting no greater difficulties, and no greater claims in regard to distance, have only an average of 1,900 electors. Here again, running right through the whole system, or scheme of the Government, there is this determined attempt to damage the Opposition; there is this underhand engineering method. There is evidence of this in Roebourne and Pilbara. Pilbara is represented by a Labour member, and we find at Pilbara 1,200 electors while Roebourne will only have 700. In summing up the figures—and they are figures for which the Government are responsible and which we have to take for granted—it will be found that under this redistribution, to show the political motive underlying it, and to show that this is the only method by which the Government can fight the Opposition instead of by a fair and manly fashion at the polls, that under this redistribution on the figures presented by the Government, 20 Opposition members will represent 61,175 electors, or one for every 3,058, and thirty Ministerial members will represent only 74,800 electors, or one for every 2,493. The average number that Ministerialists will represent will be 565 less per member than will be represented by members on the Opposi-

tion side of the House. When I talk of Opposition members, of course I exclude the two electorates cut out and include Kalgoorlie which is now Opposition. If we add two seats, which there is every prospect of the Labour party winning at the next election, namely, Canning and East Perth, which include over 8,000 electors, we will then find that 22 Opposition members will represent 69,875 electors, while 28 Ministerialists will represent only 66,100 electors; that is, 28 Ministerialists with a majority of six over the Opposition will represent 3,775 less electors than the 22 members of the Opposition. Where could you have more damning evidence of the fact that this redistribution has been wholly designed in party spirit, and not to remove anomalies nor to secure a more equitable readjustment of the representation in this Parliament, but with a deliberate attempt to secure for the minority of the electors the majority of representation in the next Parliament; that is in the event of this Redistribution of Seats Bill proving successful. I want to refer to some of the figures which were given by the Premier in his attempt to justify this iniquitous proposal. The Premier stated that on a purely population basis we would only be entitled to the same representation which we enjoy at the present time, and even where he attempted to allocate the seats on the quota as obtained under the Queensland system, he persisted in bracketing Forrest and Collie with the mining seats, whereas they should have been included with the Great Southern or South-Western seats.

The Attorney General: They are mining seats.

Mr. BATH: There is no gold mining carried on there. If the Attorney General had troubled to acquaint himself with the facts, or the method pursued in New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand where this matter is left to an impartial body of commissioners, he would have found that in New South Wales for instance, a distinction is drawn between a coal mining centre like Newcastle, a gold mining centre like Cobar, or a silver mining centre like

Broken Hill. Here there is essentially a difference between a coal mining centre like Collie and gold mining centres like the Eastern Goldfields or the Murchison. Again, we have the Premier including Pilbara, which is not only a mining but a pastoral seat, with the mining centres, whereas if we are to argue for special consideration for the North-West, Pilbara is essentially a North-West seat, and is entitled to equal consideration with the other North-West seats, and should have been left out of the goldfields and included in the North-West seats. However, on a population basis we find in round numbers, that is allowing for decimals, that the metropolitan area, Perth, Fremantle, and Metropolitan-Suburban seats, would be entitled to 18 representatives, the goldfields would be entitled to 14, coal mining and timber, that is Collie and Forrest, would be entitled to more than two on that basis, while the other constituencies including agriculture, ports and the North-West would be entitled to 16. It is true that under that the representation for the North-West would of course be a very much smaller item, but what I want to point out is that under the redistribution of seats on that basis, there could be no attack, as the main motive of redistribution, upon any party in Parliament as in this instance is made upon the Opposition, although perhaps it might be argued that an injustice would be done to outlying districts. Under such a redistribution there would be no possibility for a Government to do as they have done, to make a direct attack upon the party opposed to them in Parliament. If we are to have a choice between an absolutely equitable basis of representation, and one which is purely designed not for party advantage, and which uses community of interests, the possibilities or alleged potentialities of districts, or the scattered nature and distance of the seat of Government to the various districts to be used or discarded just as it suits the idea of the Ministry, then I say this House and the country will emphatically declare for representa-

tion on a population basis, because that at least is equity, and under that there would be no scandalous attempt to secure party advantage. The Premier was also radically wrong when he spoke of allocation of seats according to the quota as provided in the Queensland Act. For instance under such a redistribution, where the commissioners are given what is called a discretionary margin—and I want hon. members to notice that they do not use the whole margin in every case, but are given a discretionary margin which is a maximum within which they can work—the metropolitan area would, of course, have the largest quota, but the distance of the Kalgoorlie district from the seat of Government would be taken into consideration and there would be an allowance of at least 10 per cent., where there is a 20 per cent. maximum, on that account. Ports which are included in a separate group called the outports, such as Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury, have less claim to consideration from that point of view than the Eastern goldfields, because, as I have already pointed out, they have two means of communication, they are compact, and they are within a shorter distance of the metropolis than are the Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. Draper: The Commonwealth considers means of communication, not distance.

Mr. BATH: Even admitting that they are on entirely the same plane as the Eastern Goldfields they would be entitled to the 10 per cent. allowance. Then the scattered goldfields could fairly claim to have the full advantage of the quota, at any rate to a greater degree than the agricultural districts, because they are situated further afield, the areas are considerably greater, their means of communication are much more restricted, and the disadvantages in other directions are much greater. Undoubtedly in the hands of commissioners, there would be discrimination between electorates including large towns like Northam, York, Katanning, and Narrogin, and electorates in districts which are at an earlier stage of existence.

The Attorney General: That is provided for in the Bill.

Mr. BATH: It is not provided for in the details which the Premier spoke of when he was dealing with the number that would be allotted to the various groups, under what he called the Queensland system. As a matter of fact, what the Premier did was to always give the agricultural seats the advantage of the discretionary quota, and to give the Opposition seats the advantage of the increased quota in order to suit his argument. But upon the basis as it would be considered by a body of commissioners the metropolitan area would have fifteen members, Kalgoorlie and district seven, outside mining districts nine, coal mining and timber two, outports and country towns three, and agricultural districts and the North-West fourteen, making a total of 50 seats.

The Attorney General interjected.

Mr. BATH: Undoubtedly the ports are highly commercial. I can point out an instance where the community of interests has been absolutely violated to carve out a seat. I refer to the case of Bunbury. Undoubtedly Bunbury is largely linked up with Collie and the timber industry, but here undoubtedly an agricultural part is taken in, not to secure community of interests, but in order to make it more difficult for any Labour candidate to win the seat.

The Attorney General: The predominating influence in Bunbury is mainly commercial.

Mr. BATH: The point I want to emphasise is that under this redistribution of seats the Opposition members will each represent an average of over 3,000 electors, to be accurate 3,058, whilst the Ministerial members will represent an average of 2,493 electors. Let me further point out that amongst those 20 seats represented by Opposition members there will be ten including such seats as Yilgarn, Coolgardie, Kanowna, Mt. Leonora, Mt. Margaret, Collie, Murchison, and Mt. Magnet, which in regard to the large area to be represented, the scattered nature of the population, and the distance from the seat of Government, cannot be paralleled by any ten seats on the Ministerial side. The Government cannot quote ten other

seats in which the difficulties are the same. The hon. member for West Perth just now referred to the fact that community of interests is a matter taken into consideration by the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Draper: I did not say a word about community of interests. I said means of communication.

Mr. BATH: On the score of means of communication the Opposition members have an infinitely greater claim to consideration than have the Government members. I want to point out that in New South Wales the commissioners allocate a less quota to a mining town like Broken Hill, although it has a compact population, because it is so far distant from the seat of Government.

The Attorney General: What about means of communication?

Mr. BATH: There is a railway all the way. A lower quota is also allocated to a town like Cobar, but the advantage of the New South Wales system is that the matter is adjusted by commissioners who are always representative men holding high positions, and the Act specifically declares that they are not to be members of the ordinary public service or members of Parliament. At the time that Act was passed Mr. Justice Murray was one of the commissioners who were appointed. The position there is that the seats have to be allocated entirely from the point of view of convenience, so far as possible to make them compact and accessible, and certainly not in the fashion in which the Collie and Sussex seats have been allocated in order to secure a party advantage. It is significant that when Mr. Reid put that Bill through Parliament, although the Opposition to him at that time was fairly virulent, some of the members of the Opposition declared that such a system was the only possible means of avoiding gerrymandering. That has been recognised in Queensland and New Zealand where this system of allocating seats according to population, with a discretionary balance, is adopted. If there had been any desire to secure an equitable redistribution in Western Australia we would have first secured accurate information in regard to the distribution of the electors, and then we would have ap-

pointed these commissioners, and after fixing a discretionary quota, left the matter entirely to them.

The Attorney General: What is the date of the New South Wales Act?

Mr. BATH: I think the Bill was brought in and carried in 1893, and of course it provides for automatic redistribution at the end of certain periods. Naturally as development goes on and the State progresses, some districts might come into prominence, and provision is made for redistribution at stated times so that anomalies can be corrected precisely by the same means as were adopted when the first redistribution took place under the measure.

Mr. Draper: Is that also the case in New Zealand?

Mr. BATH: Yes; the New Zealand Act has recently been brought up to date and consolidated. The commissioners are appointed and they are allowed a discretionary power of 550.

Mr. Draper: Was that last year?

Mr. BATH: It is included in the consolidated statutes for 1908. In New South Wales three commissioners are appointed. They ascertain the number of electors and the number of seats, and they are allowed a discretionary margin of 600, or a percentage which amounts to about 600 on the present form of redistribution. There is just one thing I want to say in conclusion. It has been stated that the question of appointing an Agent General is being left over until the Redistribution of Seats Bill is settled, and that the gentleman to whom the appointment has been offered is not to make any announcement until the Bill has been dealt with. I regret very much that the member for Bunbury is not here this evening, because I would ask him whether, as a gentleman who is to go to London to represent this State and the whole of the people of Western Australia, and to do his best, irrespective of party—I would ask him whether he proposes to accept this position and to go to London with the stigma of having voted for this piece of political engineering. That is what I would like to know, and I regret that the member for Bunbury is not present, because if he does go Home with that stigma it will

stick to him and it will be to his eternal discredit, for I have no hesitation in repeating the words which I uttered in Kalgoorlie on Saturday night and say that this is the most shameful political piece of jobbery ever perpetrated in this State or in any other part of Australia.

Mr. OSBORN (Roebourne): I shall not attempt to take up as long a time as the member for Brown Hill because I think perhaps I can say what I have to say, and convey my meaning in a much shorter period than the member took in delivering his speech. No doubt he took a good deal of time in making his remarks, which, in my opinion, were totally beside the question, in trying to belittle every member who sits on this (Government) side of the House. I was pleased to hear the hon. member, and no doubt if he had not belittled members on this side he would have concluded his remarks long before he did.

Mr. Heitmann: Do not waste time.

Mr. OSBORN: I shall not waste time because I intend to address myself mostly to the electorate which I represent.

Mr. Bolton: This is not an electoral campaign.

Mr. Murphy: Next door to it.

Mr. OSBORN: The leader of the Opposition in addressing himself to the question quoted various newspapers to show how they had condemned the system propounded by the Government. I think it was quite unfair to the leading article in the *West Australian* from the fact that the hon. member practically left out the last paragraph which was very important to the subject. Of course it is always convenient to quote the portions that suit your argument and leave the other portions to be quoted by those who do not agree with the argument. Let me say that the Roebourne electorate has taken up a good deal of the time of members during the addresses that have been delivered by members, and a good deal of attention has been paid to that portion of the State.

Mr. Heitmann: Only by way of comparison.

Mr. OSBORN: Of course it is convenient to compare the worst with the

best: I have no hesitation in admitting that.

Mr. Walker: Is Roebourne the worst?

Mr. OSBORN: Let me say this of the northern portion of the State, which comprises at least one-third, if not more, of the whole of Australia, that if the interests of that portion of the State are not entitled to four representatives in this House, then I say certainly the other portions of the State are a good deal over-represented. The northern districts that are represented by four members are much larger than any other districts represented by other members.

Mr. Holman: My electorate is as big again as yours.

Mr. OSBORN: The districts are very large and the people are scattered all over the electorates from one end to the other, which is very rarely the case down here. To get in touch with these electorates it takes at least a month, sometimes six weeks, for a member to visit the electors, and then only to land and return. With the electorates down here members can visit them and return in a few days, and electors can communicate with head quarters and state their wants and requirements very easily. The electorate which I represent does not only contain the squatting industry, which members on the Opposition side seem to look on as something that should not exist. Members seem to think that the man who has pioneered and spent the whole of his life in isolation should have no reward whatever. These men are looked upon practically as nigger drivers and slave owners; that has been the expression used in the House on more than one occasion, and I say it is distinctly unfair. We can well judge by the remarks that have fallen from members of the Opposition as to what consideration the northern part of the State would get if it was left to their tender mercies. I think the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition was that it should get one member. In the Roebourne electorate there is not only squatting, but a considerable amount of mining is carried on which requires a great deal of attention, and which has been very much neglected for the last—

Mr. Walker: There is nothing like owning up to it.

Mr. Scaddan: A candid expression of opinion of yours.

Mr. OSBORN: It has been considerably neglected in past years from the fact that more remunerative mines have been discovered in the southern portion of the State, and had it not been for the wonderfully rich find at Southern Cross very recently, I think we could very well have looked forward to something better in the future in the mining development in the North-West, than we have had during the last 10 or 15 years. The northern districts are looked upon as insignificant, as if they were of no value whatever, so far as their commercial trade is concerned. I want to speak of the electorate I represent. Let us take the value of the exports for last year, although they are insignificant compared with those of Fremantle. From Cossack the value of the exports was £107,128, and from Onslow £87,523, or a grand total of exports of £195,350. That is a very small sum of money in some people's estimation, but to my mind it is a fair export for the electorate that has come in for such remarks and such insignificance during the debate. West Pilbara, which is practically represented by myself—

Mr. Scaddan: It is true.

Mr. OSBORN: If it is true then I do not know what members are laughing at.

Mr. Walker: Laughing at the representative of West Pilbara.

Mr. OSBORN: I am glad the members are able to appreciate the representative of West Pilbara. Last year West Pilbara turned out 7,135 tons of copper, and Onslow exported lead to the amount of 440 tons.

Mr. Underwood: Onslow lead comes from the Gascoyne electorate.

Mr. OSBORN: I am giving what left Onslow and Cossack; the member for Gascoyne is able to represent his own electorate. From the Pilbara electorate which is represented by the member for Pilbara, last year there was exported £88,147 worth of products so that, after all, the insignificant electorate of Roebourne seems to have an output of value considerably over that of Pilbara.

Mr. Underwood: His figures are as faked as the Bill.

Mr. OSBORN: Members can get them for themselves from the statistical return. Pilbara during the last six months exported £9,502 worth of products, as against the value from Roebourne, Cossack, and Onslow of £39,886. That will show that, although Roebourne electorate can only boast of 700 electors, the value exported from the electorate compares more than favourably with the electorate which the member for Pilbara represents, and which contains 1,200 voters.

Mr. Holman: Compare the products of the Golden Mile now.

Mr. OSBORN: The leader of the Opposition, while making a suggestion to the House, or attempting to make a suggestion to the House, in respect to getting over the difficulty of the redistribution of seats, and to define the boundaries in a more equitable form, advocated two systems, that of New South Wales, but for his own ideal he quoted proportional representation which is in existence in Tasmania.

Mr. Walker: Are you sure it was not Queensland, and not New South Wales?

Mr. Scaddan: I never went to New South Wales at all.

Mr. OSBORN: Proportional representation is something that has only been tried in one of the States so far, and only for a short period, and we have only the words of the leader of the Opposition to assure us that it is absolutely perfect. I suppose hon. members will admit the democratic principle involved in allowing people to have a voice in the election of their representatives, and in all matters pertaining to their own welfare. I suppose hon. members will admit that in Switzerland, where they elect their Ministries—

Mr. Heitmann: They have no Ministry in Switzerland.

Mr. OSBORN: They have a council, at any rate. The principle of proportional representation was submitted to them only a few months ago, and by a majority they discarded that principle.

Mr. Scaddan: Previously at a referendum they voted against certain proposals, which they afterwards adopted.

Mr. OSBORN: When?

Mr. Scaddan: On a subsequent occasion.

Mr. OSBORN: They did not. This subsequent occasion you speak of has never yet occurred. It is like a good many more statements the hon. member is apt to make, statements that are not on record and cannot be contradicted. This referendum was taken on October 24th, so I do not think the hon. member has information much later than that.

Mr. Scaddan: I was referring to other reforms.

Mr. OSBORN: You said they adopted this on a subsequent occasion. If not, I do not know what the hon. member was talking about. The member for Brown Hill made a comparison from which he deduced the statement that Labour members represented, in every case, more electors than did Ministerialists. While he was speaking I totted up the Fremantle electorates, which returned two Labour representatives and two Ministerialists; and I found that the two Labour members each represent 2,335 electors, while the Ministerialists each represent 3,167. If that is a majority it is beyond my comprehension. Then take Balkatta, Canning, Claremont, Guildford, and Subiaco. Among those electorates Labour has two members who represent each 3,752 electors, while the three Ministerialists represent each 4,281 electors. There is no majority about the representation there. The member for Brown Hill quoted instances which suited his argument: I am quoting instances which show that his argument was one-sided and not capable of carrying much weight. When hon. members are addressing public meetings on behalf of or against this measure, when they are endeavouring to enlist public sympathy, it would be as well if they adhered as strictly as possible to facts and figures and true statements. It is, to my mind, rather derogatory for the leader of the Opposition to quote actions of the Government, which, of course, carry reflections on the members who support that Government—to publicly state something which he knows to be absolutely incorrect; and this for no other purpose than

to damage Ministers and their supporters in the eyes of the public.

Mr. Scaddan: What did I say which was incorrect?

Mr. OSBORN: When addressing a public meeting at North Fremantle the leader of the Opposition stated that the Ministry had degraded themselves by bringing the member for Wellington from his sick bed when they thought his vote would be required. I say the leader of the Opposition knew well that was incorrect, for he knew that the hon. member had not left Bunbury.

Mr. Scaddan: I did not say they had brought him; I said they would have to bring him.

Mr. OSBORN: The hon. member said they had actually resorted to the device of bringing the member for Wellington from Bunbury from a sick bed, and keeping him within the precincts of the House in case he was wanted. It is not nice, it is not gentlemanly to endeavour to degrade one section of the House in order to bring home arguments to suit one's ends.

Mr. Scaddan: I also referred to blind supporters like Mr. Moore.

Mr. OSBORN: I do not think you mentioned Mr. Moore's name, but I think it is derogatory to resort to tactics such as these. I trust that our arguments will be directed to the facts of the Bill, and that we shall confine ourselves to the Bill and to the facts which are therein contained, and not use statements calculated to bring discredit on opposing sections of the House.

Mr. KEENAN (Kalgoorlie): I had no intention of addressing the House on this particular matter, nor indeed do I think, occupying the position I do, it should be necessary for me to do anything more than record my vote. But altogether apart from the merits of the last address which has been made to this Assembly, altogether apart from the argument which the hon. member has addressed to us, and which I candidly accept as conveying no personal opinions, one has to bear in mind that this question will finally be decided, not by the House as at present constituted, but by the jury of the people of Western Australia. If there



be any reason why one should not address oneself to the House on this side of the question it would be the utter uselessness of any effort in that direction. The primary idea of representative Government is that some measure should be brought down, framed, it is true, by the Ministry, the work of their united brains and representing a proposal that specially calls for consideration at the hands of the Government supporters; but, except for that, it should come down to the House leaving members absolutely free to express their opinions on all its merits and details. What has transpired in regard to this Bill? Unless I am wholly misinformed—if I am I shall welcome a correction at the earliest opportunity—I find this measure has been submitted to every member who sits on the Ministerial side of the House, and that before the Government ventured to bring it into the Chamber they came with a pledge in their pockets that every member sitting behind them would support the measure as printed. Is that in any way consonant with the idea of representative Government? Why, on other occasions when I sat in another part of the House I have hurled almost insults, certainly strong condemnation, at members sitting on this side of the House, because, by the constitution of their party, they were in a measure bound to submit to the decrees of caucus. It has been to me a principle suggesting an invasion of individual liberty, and I have, on occasions, most severely criticised it, and criticised it, I will venture to say, with the whole support of those sitting on the Government side of the House; yet to-day we have a far more flagrant case than can be recited against members on this side of the House.

Mr. Monger: Has that position changed since you were a Minister?

Mr. KEENAN: We have a Bill brought down of which every line has been scrutinised by hon. members on the Government side.

Mr. Carson: That is not correct.

Mr. KEENAN: Well, at least has been known to hon. members.

Mr. Jacoby: No; incorrect again.

Mr. KEENAN: Well, how much have the Government members known? It

would be interesting to know how far—

Mr. Murphy: You ought to know before you make the statement.

Mr. KEENAN: Certainly the knowledge existed.

Mr. Murphy: It did not exist so far as I am concerned.

Mr. KEENAN: To what extent did it not exist?

Mr. Murphy: I may be the exception, but I make that statement.

Mr. Scaddan: It is incorrect.

Mr. KEENAN: If the member for Fremantle wishes it, I will ask him was he aware of the proposals of the Bill in regard to the seat of Fremantle?

Mr. Murphy: No.

Mr. KEENAN: Before the Bill came down?

Mr. Murphy: Never.

Mr. Troy: He said this afternoon he was.

Mr. Murphy: On a point of order—

Mr. KEENAN: I accept it; there is no point of order.

Mr. Murphy: On the interjection there is.

Mr. KEENAN: Surely I cannot be called to a point of order on the score of an interjection by another member. If the hon. member tells me he did not know of any proposal in the Bill, I accept his statement unreservedly. If that is the case he has not been put in that position in which, I have every reason to believe, some hon. members have been put. Now, I have challenged any attempt to prejudge the issue of this House in another place, and I challenge it here again to-night. And I say without any reservation that while I was a Minister of the Crown I never allowed a single proposal that was to be made in the House to be seen by any person except it was a member of the Ministry; and for that reason, during the time I was a member of the Government, when Bills came down to the House, as hon. members remember, there was considerable discussion on both sides of the House and, I think, a proper discussion, so that we were a representative Assembly and were not in the position of receiving that which was cut-and-dried and for all practical purposes passed before being brought down to the House. On the other

hand, let me assume the position when a Government, a Government with a majority of one, carry on with tactics like the present. What is the result? They pledge themselves beforehand to carry a measure; they get their followers or supporters to promise to give it unqualified support; and when the Bill arrives in the House, though it is supposed to be the effort of the House, it is merely brought about by private truckling, by arrangements made beyond the boundaries of these halls, though it is supposed to be the work of the House. I maintain it is subversive to all principles of representative Government when the party, which properly in the past stood up for individual rights and individual liberty, should commit itself to conduct of this character; and in my opinion this is one of the very worst features of this measure. If it can be true in regard to any Bill that it should come down to the House and that the Government should allow the House as a whole to express their honest opinion about it, it is infinitely more true in regard to a measure of this character. If there is any Bill of an entirely non-party character it is a Bill adjusting the boundaries of electorates. If there is any measure on which the Government should say, "We do not want to legislate on party lines in connection with this," it should be a measure of this kind. What has been the experience this session? Every other Bill of importance has been thrown on the floor of the House to be cut to pieces at the will of every member. Even the Minister in charge of the Bill has disgusted those sitting in all parts of the House at his extreme urbanity in receiving suggestions for amendment to his Bill. He has scarcely fought for or defended his measure. Yet in this single Bill, which should be non-party, we have the extraordinary spectacle of the members of the House being practically gagged in order that it may pass through in the form in which it is presented to the House. I could quote the practice in other places; I could point to the method in which Queensland is dealing with a similar problem; I could point to the method in which New South Wales recently dealt with the

redistribution of seats, and to the proposal which was made before the Commonwealth Parliament when Mr. Deakin's party was in power; or I could point to the practice in other countries governed under the same constitution as we enjoy here; but there are two methods, and only two honourable methods, for dealing with a question of this kind. The first is to put entirely beyond politics the question of the adjustment of boundaries by passing a Bill appointing commissioners, who are not in political life, to bring before Parliament a proposal setting out what ought to be the boundaries of the electorates. The other method is to adopt a conference of both parties or of all parties in the House, and at such a conference arrive at mutually-agreed-upon boundaries. I know of no other method except these two which preserves alike the honour of the House, the honour of the Ministry, and the honour of members. Any other method leads, and must lead to an attempt by the measure to make a party gain. It is alleged that what we are doing now was done by Sir Walter James, then Mr. James, when Premier of the State in 1903; but it is absolutely untrue to use that defence. Although Sir Walter James did bring down a measure setting out electorates, he consulted every party in the House about the boundaries; and, indeed, although there was no formal conference—

Mr. JACOBY: From whom did you get that statement?

Mr. KEENAN: From Sir Walter James himself, and I presume he is an authority on the matter.

Mr. JACOBY: The Opposition at that time were not consulted.

Mr. KEENAN: On this occasion I prefer to accept the statement of Sir Walter James to the interjection of the member for Swan.

Mr. HOLMAN: And you are quite right in doing so.

Mr. KEENAN: And I believe I am correct in what I am stating. But even supposing it be not correct, and assuming that the Ministry, hunting for some excuse for conduct that has brought on the House, I have no hesitation in saying, in-

famy which it has never seen before, cite the example of the James Government, would that defend them? Is it a defence for a man charged with theft that others have stolen? They must adduce some reason to defend their conduct, and not seek in that reason merely the fact that others have been guilty of it. I defy them to find any Government in any other State of Australia that has brought down before Parliament a measure, or that has arranged a measure that in fact its own followers alone are judges of, that even a simpleton, a man entirely unacquainted with the political influences at work in the country, could not fail to see was one designed primarily and almost entirely for the sake of saving for the Government their own political lives. Nobody denies, nobody challenges the necessity for a redistribution: but although it may be relieved to some extent by a just and equitable measure framed by a Government and brought down by a Government, even although they infringe what I hold they would infringe, the proper method of dealing with this matter, may I point out that such a remedy would be merely for the time being so long as we have single electorates within narrow boundaries, and so long as our State remains, as it must for a number of years, one with fluctuating industries; because in a growing country experience in a large measure shows the difficulties that its industries must contend with, at times employing a large number of men and at times employing but a few. I say so long as we continue the single electorates we will have these continual fluctuations in the number of electors, and the smaller the boundaries of electorates the more certainly will there be of fluctuations. But what are the Government doing to meet that difficulty? Instead of addressing themselves to this question on broad and proper lines, they have merely hunted for some excuse for retaining the single electorates which will enable them to retain political power, unless, as I hope, the great mass of the people refuse to endorse a policy of this kind, whether farmers, artisans, or miners. But assuming their political convictions remain the same as they

have been discovered to be in the past, Ministers hope by the retention of these single electorates in the form proposed by them to retain political power. I do not take exception to the representation of large areas of land in this State that have but a scanty population. I am not one of those who say that the rule of the quota should apply throughout the land; nor do I think that any large majority or that any part of the House would deny for the large areas in the North, which are to-day scantily populated, a representation far more generous on its scale than any representation we would extend to the settled districts: and I do not, therefore, advocate that the great North should be confined to one or two members of the House because of the scanty population we find there. I will admit that in this State we are bound to go beyond the mere counting of heads, that we are bound to take into account the future development of the State, and that we are bound to take into account the necessity for all our industries and for our possibilities being represented in the Chamber in order that they may not only receive consideration but that they may receive that necessary support which alone will be given to them when their cases can be made out by members representing them. But with this exception, an exception which is peculiar to Western Australia and South Australia, I cannot admit that there is any justification in making a differential value between those who follow different industries. I cannot see why the artisan employed at North Fremantle is only to have approximately one-third of the value of a vote of a farm labourer who is employed in the Greenough flats, represented by the Attorney General. I cannot see any possible logical reason that can be advanced for giving representation of that character. Is it suggested that the intelligence of the agricultural labourer—and I am now comparing those equally employed, not the employers, but the employed—is it suggested that the agricultural labourer is more intelligent than the artisan employed, say, on the works springing up at North Fremantle, or anywhere else we

choose in the State? It seems to me we are coming down to a most extraordinary state of pure and simple theory without an atom of reason to support it. Indeed, if we search for the reason, the only reason we can find is this, that it is highly desirable for the present Government that the agricultural labourer, who is believed to be their supporter, should have the vote, and that the artisan of North Fremantle should not. Therefore, we find one consistent reason for this extraordinary differentiation in the value of voters, and that reason is as they are opposed or friendly to the present Government. I challenge the possibility of such a political rule being accepted in Western Australia. I do not believe that even those on whom this excessive value is cast would in the long run endorse the action of the Government that gave it to them. If that were so, we might despair of having any reform in any of our electoral matters; because all reform broadens the basis of representation: and if those who enjoy to-day an exceptional value as voters in the State were supposed to be prepared to defend that excessive value at all hazards and not to extend it to others who were equally entitled to it, we might despair of any reform. But I challenge the possibility of an appeal being made, a genuine appeal, even to those on whom this excessive right is conferred and having that appeal answered in their favour. It is true there is a method of dealing with our electoral reform which would proceed on true and on rational lines, but it has not even been touched by the present Government. I refer to the method of proportional representation. It is beyond a doubt a fact that in all Parliaments, not merely in our local Parliament but in the Federal Parliament, and in the Parliaments of the other States, public opinion is not properly reflected by the number of members in the House. Let me take the position of the Senate and Western Australia. As we know, the whole of the representation is enjoyed by one political party, yet that political party is ready at once to admit that it is not entitled to the whole of the representation, and is prepared to admit that if representation were based on the votes of the electors at

least one-third of the representatives would belong to the other party. And indeed in the last Parliament which sat in England, the one dissolved the other day, some person was good enough to work out the proper proportion of members and it was shown that the majority was at least three times the number that the voters behind that party justified them to in the House of Commons. Proportional representation aims at and achieves to a large extent the reflex of public opinion in the most accurate manner. There is no difficulty in giving effect to it. For a long time the great bugbear in a scheme of this character was that it was too intricate. I would consider it an insult to the West Australian electors to suppose that they have not the same capacity as the electors in Tasmania, and I would consider it also an insult to the State Electoral Department to suppose that they are not capable of organising and carrying through an election equally well as the department in Tasmania. Under these circumstances I cannot admit the argument that the proposal would be too intricate to work out. Let me point out that not only would it mean that the proper proportion would appear in this House as reflecting public opinion, but under the larger electorates we would not have the necessity for the constant readjustment of our electoral boundaries.

Mr. Jacoby: How would you manage in the North?

Mr. KEENAN: There would be no more difficulty in the north than there would be in the south, east or west. What I was pointing out was that besides producing in this State an accurate reflection of public opinion, it would also achieve other desirable results. It would kill for ever the spirit of parochialism, which does so much harm in State Parliaments. What is there after all that so much influences votes on measures? What blocks the way in carrying on some work of national progress, but the feeling of parochial jealousy?

Mr. Harper interjected.

Mr. KEENAN: I am not here to discuss the question of Commonwealth, but the question of this Bill. If we are to

proceed to effect electoral reform on proper lines we should adopt a measure which if not entirely, will to an extent, destroy parochialism. I call to the minds of hon. members that parochialism is one of the elements in the House which is most hostile to the true progress of the State. There is never a question discussed here that is not in some measure influenced by this parochial feeling, and indeed we know that certain measures have only gone through Parliament because of the order of their proposal and because other parochial works behind them would not have been reached if the other particular measures had not been passed. Again, the most important reason for having larger electorates is that there would not be the constant necessity for readjustment, there would not be the same reason nor would there be the same justification for the necessity as we have it to-day for a redistribution of seats, and above all there would be this—that on account of the large number of electors included in each electorate and on account of the fact and bearing in mind that the House would be a reflex of public opinion, there would be no temptation for any Government to indulge in the practice which the present Government have indulged in of bringing down a measure which was calculated to achieve, the result of gerrymandering electorates. You could not if you had large electorates returning members on a proportional basis, design anything which would defeat the views of the people, and therefore it would be useless to try it. Considering that we have now set a precedent in this House, it may be followed by future Governments, and it may be even carried to a further extent by future Governments. We were proud to think that this kind of thing was confined to the American continent, but I fear that unless some reform takes place we shall have this carried to an extent that every party in power will justify themselves by the precedent of their predecessors, and will take the opportunity of readjusting the boundaries so that they may go back again to power. That is the most vicious consequence of the proposal now before the House. I propose shortly to point out how the elec-

torates could have been framed dealing with proportional representation. Under our present constitution we have ten provinces, and on examining the electorates which constitute those provinces I find in the Central Province that the average for all electorates is 1,959. I am quoting from figures taken by the Electoral Department in June, not from what are plausibly called approximate figures now submitted to Parliament, and which we have no reason to suppose are in any way accurate.

Mr. Draper: Are you dealing with the Council or the Assembly rolls?

Mr. KEENAN: I am dealing with the Assembly rolls. The average for all electorates in the Central Province according to the returns of the Electoral Department is 1,959. There are six seats in that province, three occupied by supporters of the Government and three by supporters of the Opposition. The three former only average 1,707 votes, while the three Opposition average 2,221. The quota for the State is 2,729, so that practically the three seats represented by the Government supporters were over 1,000 each under the quota. The East Province has an average for all electorates of 2,593, and all five seats are occupied by Government supporters. The Metropolitan Province has an average of 4,826, three seats are occupied by Government supporters and one by a supporter of the Opposition, the three Government supporters representing an average of 3,622 electors and the Oppositionist representing 8,437. Of course I admit that the Oppositionist on that occasion represents the minority. For the purpose of my argument it is not material that a member got in by a minority vote, because I am taking credit in every case for both sides. In the Metropolitan-Suburban Province the average for all electorates is 4,069, and three seats are held by the Government and two by the Opposition. The Government members represent an average of 4,281 electors and the two members of the Opposition an average of 3,751 electors. In the North Province the average is 1,181 for the three seats held by the Government, and the one held by the member of the Opposition is three less. It is practically the same in

this case. In the North-East Province the average is 2,583, and the one seat held by the Government averages 2,808, and the five seats held by the Opposition average 2,538. The South Province has an average of 2,700, and all the six seats are held by the Opposition. In the South-East Province the average is 3,069. Two seats are represented by Government supporters and the average is 3,318 voters, while one seat is held by the Opposition and the average is 2,571. In the South-West Province the average is 1,996 and five seats are held by Government supporters, the average being 1,640 votes and two seats are held by the Opposition, the average being 2,885. In the West province there is an average of 2,751, two seats are held by the Government, the average being 3,167 and two seats are held by the Opposition, the average being 2,335. Taking the provinces as a whole the Central is 4,620 below the quota, that is, multiply the number of electorates by the deficiency and it will be found that it is on the whole 4,620 below the quota, or 770 for each electorate. The Metropolitan Province on the other hand is 8,388 in excess of the quota, the average being 2,097 for each electorate. The East Province is 819 in excess of the quota or an average of 164 above the quota for each electorate. The Metropolitan-Suburban is 6,702 above the quota, or 1,340 above for each electorate. The North Province is 6,193 short of the quota and the average is 1,548 below for each electorate. The North-East province is 873 below the quota or an average of 145 short of the quota for each electorate. The South Province is 175 below the quota or an average of 29 below the quota for each electorate. The South-East Province is 1,021 in excess of the quota or an average of 340 above. The South-West Province is 5,130 below the quota for each electorate or an average of 733 below, and the West Province is 25 below the quota for each electorate. Therefore, the position is that, allowing for variation in representation, the East Province, which returns five members may stand. If an adjustment is necessary we can wait until the numbers increase: as it is to-day, with

only 164 in excess of the quota, it may well stand. The North-East Province, on the other hand, is 145 below the quota for each electorate and again we may well wait for some further development of population before we alter that position. The South which is only 29 in each electorate below is also small and we can again well wait for future developments before we readjust its electoral boundaries. The South-East Province possibly requires some consideration because there are 340 in excess in each electorate, but again it is not pressing and it is not a case where there is immediate necessity for legislation. The West Province practically had to-day an exact quota for all its electorates. The only extremes are in the North Province which is 1,548 below the quota for each electorate, the South-West Province which is 733 below the quota, and the Central Province which is 770 below the quota. These three provinces return 17 members and also we have extremes on the plus side, of the Metropolitan Province, 2,097 above the quota and the Metropolitan-Suburban Province of 1,340 above the quota in each electorate. These two together returned 9 members. Now, I would suggest that by the addition of the two seats to the Metropolitan we would reduce the excess to 490 above the quota, and that, having regard to the fact that the people of this province have many means of placing their wants before members, would be a generous treatment of the metropolitan area. By adding one seat to the Metropolitan-Suburban we would reduce the excess that it shows to-day to 662 above the quota for each electorate, and by taking one seat only from the North Province, one seat from the Central Province, and one seat from the South-West Province, we would provide for these increases in the new districts. My proposal would be to add two seats to the metropolitan area, and one to the metropolitan-suburban area. The other areas, the numbers at present not being excessive, I would leave as they are. We can well wait for the developments of time, and allow the position to stand as it is until they have arrived at a stage when a much larger proportion

of population is shown in those different centres.

The Attorney General: You propose to take one from the Central Province and one from the Northern Province?

Mr. KEENAN: I would take one from the Northern, one from the Central, and one from the South-West. The South-West has at present 773 less votes than the quota in each electorate, and the province as a whole is short of the quota by 5,130 voters. Now the result of the scheme which I have roughly outlined is that the Central province would return five members, and would be still 378 voters below the quota for each electorate; that is a province including the seat of the Attorney General, Geraldton, Irwin, and a large proportion of the farming districts. Every electorate in it would remain 378 below the quota, but we are in a position to allow for a fluctuation of this character without in any way interfering with the general representation of the State. The second electorate would be the East province which would also return five members and each electorate would be 164 above the quota. I have allowed that excess for the same reason that I have allowed 378 below the quota in the Central Province. There would be no danger to the true representation of public opinion in a provision of that sort. The third electorate would be the Metropolitan, which would return six members, and would be 490 above the quota in each electorate. It is obvious that the Metropolitan can well afford to be an electorate having an excess of that character, because it has means of placing its wants before members that are not enjoyed by distant electorates, and in effect has access to every member of Parliament. The Metropolitan-Suburban Province would return six members and the electorates would be 662 above the quota. That is the largest excess in my scheme, and I can justify it on the grounds that in a large measure the Metropolitan-Suburban population is residential. Those who are living in that area are engaged in enterprises in other parts of the State, and in reality have more representation than other people, because they are represented where they reside, and

their industries are also represented separately. The North province would return three members instead of four as to-day, and each electorate would be 1,135 below the quota for the State. That is a very large deficiency, but I am prepared to advocate it for the reasons I have generally given expression to, namely, that we must allow representation for expansion. Although it may be criticised and be said to be something which detracts from the general merits of the scheme, I am prepared to support it because I believe that we have to go beyond the mere counting of heads when we are dealing with an expanding State such as we have here. The North-East Province would return as to-day six members, and each electorate would be 145 below the quota. That is a very small figure compared with the one I have just mentioned, and the 378 below the quota in the Central Province, and compared also with the number I will quote for another agricultural electorate. The South Province would return six members the same as to-day, and there we would have practically the quota, for each electorate would be merely 29 votes below the quota. The South-East Province would return as to-day three members, and they would have an excess in each electorate of 340 voters. The South-West would return six members, and would be in each electorate 400 below the quota. As some of the electorates such as Collie and Forrest exceed the quota to-day this means that the agricultural electorates are much below the quota. Lastly there is the West province which has practically the quota, being only 25 above it. The number of seats accounted for is 50 distributed amongst 10 electorates. A scheme of that kind if laid before the House, even though exception might be taken to it by some critics, would at least be admitted to be something designed to bring about the proper representation of public opinion in this House, and designed not for the purposes of party gain, but for the general public good, in order that Parliament might have not merely the semblance but the actual gift of authority to legislate. I have also ventured to make a segregation of the electorates according to industries. I have credited to agriculture, Greenough,

Irwin, Beverley, Northam, Toodyay, York, Katanning, Williams, Murray, Nelson, Sussex, and Wellington; and the total number of voters is 29,065, or an average of 2,338. That average would not be in any way disturbed by the creation of these large proportional representation electorates. On the other hand I have also taken out the existing seats for the industry of mining, namely, Brown Hill, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Boulder, Menzies, Leonora, Ivanhoe, Yilgarn, Cue, Mt. Magnet, Coolgardie, Dundas, Hannans, Mt. Margaret, and Murchison. There the total number of voters is 38,333, and the average 2,555 or roughly 220 higher than the average for the agricultural districts. Now, taking the shipping electorates, Geraldton, Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, South Fremantle, Bunbury, and Albany, we would get a total number of electors of 16,905, or an average of 2,415. In the pastoral electorates I have included Gascoyne, Kimberley, Roebourne, and Pilbara. By crediting Pilbara, which is a mining district, to the pastoral industry I have raised the average, but undoubtedly Pilbara represents to some extent pastoral interests, and therefore I feel no compunction about giving them the benefit of the population which is attracted there largely by the industry of mining. The total for the four seats would 4,723, or an average of 1,181. The Metropolitan residential and Metropolitan-Suburban residential and industrial would include Perth, North Perth, East Perth, West Perth, Balcatta, Canning, Claremont, Subiaco, Guildford, and Swan, with a total number of voters of 42,474, an average of 4,247. Timber is represented by one single electorate, Forrest, which has a voting strength of 2,779 whilst coal also has a single electorate, with an electoral roll of 2,992; both of these being in excess of the average for the State. The effect of the proposed redistribution under the scheme I have outlined would be by taking away one seat each from the Central, North, and South-West provinces to raise the average of the agricultural, shipping, pastoral, and mining industries to the following figures: Agriculture to 2,640 electors, mining to 2,730, shipping to 2,445, and pastoral

to 1,574, and to reduce the Metropolitan and Metropolitan-Suburban residential and industrial to 3,226, but coal and timber would remain as before. The figures are correct, but the scheme is roughly drawn, and it is merely to show that there is no difficulty, after sitting down with a paper and pencil for a little while, in laying before the House an actual scheme of proportional representation. There is no difficulty in devising a measure which would lead to the creation of a national Parliament, which would preserve the State rights as against any encroachment by a greater and more powerful Parliament, and one which would be in every sense trusted by those who have to look to Parliament to frame laws and govern the country. It is of vital importance to us, and viewing, as some of us do, the necessity for the preservation of our State lives, we should so frame our electoral representation that the confidence of the people will be behind it. We are coming without a doubt to an era when there will be many who will advocate the total abolition of State government, or at any rate its reduction to a state of complete subjection to the larger and more powerful Parliament. I am one of those who holds the strongest possible objection to the surrender by the local government of any of their rights, and holding these views I contemplate with the gravest anxiety the course which is now being followed by His Majesty's Government in this State, because if there is anything which will lead the people to vote for Unification it is the belief that they are being deliberately deprived of the right to govern themselves by some specious form of legislation promoted for party ends. If there be anything which would lead on to the referendum—and we must bear in mind the right to take a referendum rests not with us but with others—if there be anything which on such an occasion would lead the referendum to be hostile to the State Government it would be the feeling that the State Government has been so manoeuvred and so fashioned and so shaped that it is not a Government calculated to express the wishes of the people of Western Australia. I may be pardoned if for



the moment I become reminiscent inasmuch as when I had the honour to bring before the House a proposal for an electoral reform I included in the proposal the machinery for proportional representation. It occurs to me that if I had adopted the tactics, which I am glad I did not adopt, of consulting the Ministerial party and in that way making them pledged supporters to the measure, we would have been in the position that those sitting on the Ministerial side would then have been bound to support a scheme of this character. I am glad that the advantage gained by such an objectionable course is lost. If members will address themselves to this momentous question with open minds and ask themselves not what is to be the gain of the moment, what is to be the gain of the future; if they ask themselves what will be the result, not next year when an election is to take place, but five years hence when the issue of the existence of the State Government is to be tried and determined, then I am sure they will not commit themselves to the paltry, the temporary and wretched scheme that is before us, but they will demand that in substitution of it there shall be some broad and generous scheme that would hold the confidence of the people and lead ultimately to the complete establishment of our State Government. I have but little hope that much I have said will bear any fruit. I cannot but recognise that, to a large extent, the debate in this House is but a farcical proceeding. But we are not addressing the House only as far as the House is concerned, we are addressing a larger and more generous and just jury, and bearing that in mind, I have no doubt that the great mass of the people, not those blind with party prejudice on either side of the House, but those free to judge and determine according to the best of their judgment and conscience, that a majority of the people will favour not the scheme now before us, even though it may be made law, but they will favour a broad and generous representation, which will admit of all sections, no matter in what part of the State they reside, being represented in the House, and will give the House that authority that will save it when a crisis

in its history arrives. This is probably the last occasion, at least of an important character that I shall have the honour of addressing the House and Parliament, and I avail myself of it to express my thanks for the courtesy I have received at the hands of those sitting on the Opposition benches, a courtesy which I should have received more justly from another quarter. I may add that that courtesy has not been in any way abridged by any attempt made to mould the opinions I hold to the opinions of those amongst whom I am now sitting. If it be possible in political life to feel with those from whom you differ on some matters, but those whom you can generously support on broader issues, that sentiment has been brought home to me during this session. The opinions I held five years ago are the opinions I hold today. It is true they are matured by experience, and by the lesson of learning from others what is wiser and better, but the ideals—whilst I know that to a large measure the dreams of the youthful politician are made to be shattered—the ideals remain as lights on the horizon to guide one to the harbour of rest and success. Bills which are framed on broad and generous lines. Bills which may have realigned to some extent a great and national ideal are Bills, however criticised and opposed, which will, when they find their way on the statute-book, create something that the party which placed them there will remain proud of, but Bills of the character such as the one before the House, what does it attempt to achieve? what does it attempt to accomplish as the result of being placed on the statute-book? if not but the one miserable result of giving to the party who passed it a better chance at the next elections. It is so miserable, so despicable a result, that even if I had to come here at a greater sacrifice than is involved in my being here tonight, I should have come to record my protest against it. It may not be possible to carry it further, and to record my vote against it. Even if it were possible at this late hour which has now been reached to reconsider something which in its nature will discredit this Parliament, and the party, possibly, that passes it, I hope

it will not be too late for that to take effect.

On motion by Mr. Gordon, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—YORK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE TRANSFER.**

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

# **BILL—PERMANENT RESERVES REDEDICATION No. 1.**

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

# **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1910-1911.**

*In Committee of Supply.*

Department of Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. D. Connolly, Minister); the Premier in charge of the Votes.

*Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £8,429:*

Mr. HOLMAN: The Estimates would go through more quickly if the Minister in charge would give a brief explanation; but the Premier had all along endeavoured to get the Estimates through without giving any information, which was in contrast to other Ministers, whose explanations had been somewhat feeble but who had done their best in the circumstances. If the Minister in charge of the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department was going to adopt the attitude of forcing those Estimates through simply because he realised he had a following which would support everything he did, then it would be necessary for members of the Opposition to thoroughly inquire into the administration of the department, which was notoriously the worst of all. In many of the sub-departments under the Colonial Secretary were to be found some of the worst systems perpetrated and the worst administrative actions going on. Despite the fact that many capable officers were employed in these departments they were forced to carry out their work in a manner reflecting credit upon nobody. He would not have spoken on these Estimates at all were it not for the fact that the Minister in charge was content to sit

down and ask the Committee to pass nearly £400,000 without any information at all. It was not his intention to allow the silent passing of all this money without due information.

The Premier: The hon. member can have all the information he wishes; he has never been refused information.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was always wise for the Minister in charge of the Estimates to give a brief explanation of the various departments.

The Premier: There has never been any opening introductory speech made in respect to the Colonial Secretary's Estimates; it is recognised that the Minister is not in this House.

Mr. HOLMAN: And in consequence the Colonial Secretary's Estimates always took up more time than those of any other department. The Minister in charge should be in a position to give a brief explanation of the work going on in each of the various branches. The very absence of the Colonial Secretary from the Chamber was the greater reason why members should be given all information on the various items. Yet we had not one word of explanation, and an attempt had been made to force the Estimates through without any explanation at all. When it came to a question of detail the Minister would merely read out a few typewritten remarks supplied him from the Colonial Secretary's Department.

The Premier: Could you do anything else yourself?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes; a little inquiry of a personal nature on the part of the Premier in regard to this department would serve to show the Premier that many of the items of expenditure were by no means satisfactory, and the Premier would learn that a good many important questions did not receive the consideration they deserved. There was, for instance, the question of hospitals. It would be well if the Premier himself acquired some information to give the Committee in this respect. Again, there was the question of aborigines. Members should be told exactly what was being done, and what was the intention of the Govern-

ment in regard to the aborigines. Then there were the friendly societies and the Arbitration Act. It was well known that a great deal of discontent had been brought about by the Government's refusal to amend the arbitration laws. Unless this question was grappled with it would be the means of causing an industrial upheaval from one end of the State to the other. Again, we knew that the Immigration and Tourists' Bureau was not being well administered by any means, while another question calling for a great deal of serious consideration was that of the police. We were told nothing in regard to any of these important questions. If we could be assured that the administration of the Colonial Secretary's Department would be improved in the future, we could, perhaps, afford to allow the Estimates to go through without strict inquiry, but in the circumstances it would be necessary to make the closest scrutiny on every detail. All this could have been saved by a brief explanatory statement by the Minister in charge of the Estimates. We required to know what was going to be the policy of the Government in regard to our goals. Were we to have the promised inquiry, and if so when, and by whom was it going to be conducted? Being in charge of the whole of the legislation in another place and having so many sub-departments to look after, the Colonial Secretary had but very little opportunity of giving to matters of detail the attention which they deserved; so we found that instead of the industrial laws of Western Australia being administered they were absolutely ignored. From the present Government we had had an outline of a scheme for instituting a department of commerce and industry. We had heard but very little about it of late.

The Premier: That is under the Agricultural Department.

Mr. HOLMAN: It went to show how little the Premier knew about these Estimates when he told the Committee that the industrial laws were administered by the Agricultural Department. We had only just passed the Agricultural Estimates, which contained not a solitary item deal-

ing with an industrial matter. If the Premier could not give us better information than that in connection with these particular Estimates we would know but very little when it was all over. It was absurd for the Premier to come here and tell the Committee that the industrial legislation of the State was being administered by the Agricultural Department.

The Premier: I said the Department of Industry belonged to the Agricultural Department.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was the department of commerce and industry he had referred to.

The Premier: There is no such department.

Mr. HOLMAN: Perhaps it was just as well, for the departments we had were not administered. The Premier ought to have been in a position to tell us what was being done. When opportunity was given to the Colonial Secretary to take up a position against the workers, we always found him ready to do it backed up by his Government; and as soon as any industrial trouble occurred the Government immediately took up the side of the employers, even going so far as to prostitute some of the laws of the State in their efforts on behalf of the employers. On the other hand, when the rights of the workers were attacked, when every right and privilege they possessed was encroached on by those on the other side, the Government took no action; but when any trifling dispute occurred, the whole weight of the Government was thrown against the workers, and every effort made to defeat them in the courts of law. It was useless to expect anything from members on the Government side. With one or two exceptions they were opposed to the people of the State getting fair treatment. Now, when the threat was made to pass these Estimates through without explanation, one was justified in offering opposition, though good effect might have been had if the Treasurer had used some of those persuasive powers he possessed in telling members that he knew little about the administrative work of these departments. It was only courtesy to give some explanation;

but since it was not offered, general explanation would be sought on every item. There were important divisions, some of the most important departments of the State, under the Colonial Secretary. Was it intended to carry on the Police Department as it was carried on in the past? Was it intended to amend the Arbitration Act? No Government with any respect could refuse to amend that Act in face of the criticism offered by the president of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. MURPHY: It was unfortunate the Minister in charge of these departments was not a member of the Assembly, and was unable to introduce his Estimates as other Ministers did. There was general complaint that the tendency on the part of Ministers was to divert responsibility to the House for the administration of their various departments by handing over to committees, boards, and trusts certain things for which they should be directly responsible to the House. There was no department with less direct responsibility to Parliament, as regards the administration of various matters that nominally the Minister was head of, than the department controlled by the Colonial Secretary. Health matters were entrusted for years to a central board of health not directly responsible to Parliament. The administration of the gaols was vested in a controller general, who might or might not make truthful replies to the House when questions were put to the Colonial Secretary. Fire brigade matters were vested in a board, though the Colonial Secretary was nominally head of that branch of the department. Last, but not least, the control of the greatest commercial asset of the State outside of the railways was handed over to an irresponsible body. He referred to the harbour works at Fremantle. Ever since the harbour trust was established the works were not controlled in the best interests of the State, or the general community, or the trading community. The very first action that august body, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, took caused it to be the laughing stock of the seafaring community throughout the British Empire. We had a harbour upon which millions of money had been

spent, and the first thing to be done in making a port stand well with the shipping community was to make that port safe, but the most idiotic action from a seafaring point of view was the removal of the pilots from Rottnest and bringing them into the river.

Mr. Scaddan: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. MURPHY: It was not a matter of opinion.

Mr. Scaddan: I have heard other opinions expressed.

Mr. MURPHY: It was just as well that the leader of the Opposition challenged him, because he was ready to submit documentary evidence which he had taken care to preserve, and the facts showed that there was not a shipmaster who was in favour of the alteration. It was admitted that the action of the Harbour Trust was upheld by landsmen, and perhaps by some of the captains whose navigation was confined to trips between Adelaide and Fremantle, but there was not one commander from overseas who supported the change. This change was the result of handing over the control of such an important concern as the harbour to an irresponsible body of landsmen who did not know one end of a ship from the other.

Mr. Scaddan: The Minister should have vetoed the change.

Mr. MURPHY: But he did not.

Mr. Holman: Why did he not?

Mr. MURPHY: Because he did not have sense enough. If the Committee would permit him he would read the opinion of Commander Lavington, of the "Ornba," and perhaps the member for Ivanhoe would admit that that officer knew something about shipping.

Mr. Scaddan: Did he write to you?

Mr. MURPHY: This commander had published a statement in the Press. He said—

For my own part I should not be affected by the change, but from a seaman's point of view the proposal is very wrong. No seaman can doubt which is the right place for a station. What is the use of having the pilots at Fremantle to a shipmaster approaching in thick weather? They might just as well

stay in bed, because by the time they reach the vessel in a north-west gale, which is common to your coast, she might be lost.

If the pilots had never been shifted from Rottneest the "Orizaba" would never have been lost.

Mr. Angwin: That was in broad daylight.

Mr. MURPHY: It happened at 8.30 in the morning, and if the pilots had been there and the regulations as printed carried out the "Orizaba" would never have gone on to the Five-fathom bank.

Mr. Scaddan: The pilots do not agree with you there.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member had been twice over to Rottneest and now wanted to pose as a qualified seaman. Many others protested against the change. Captain Volger, a commander of a North German Lloyd mail boat, protested against the change; Captain Cole, of the P. & O. liner "Australia"; Captain Verron, another P. & O. officer; Captain Mellin, of the British ship "Scottish Minstrel"; Captain Billet, of the barque "Criffel"; Captain Langbourne, of the P. & O. "Marmora"; Captain Cantley, of the "Jessie Osborn"; and Captain McCarron, of the American barque "General Fairchild"; and Captain Archer, of the "Orizaba"—all these people objected.

Mr. Angwin: Captain Archer would have said anything to get out of it.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, when the hon. member was on the Bench.

Mr. Angwin: I was not there.

Mr. MURPHY: The hon. member was just as bad, because he acquitted the other men.

Mr. Scaddan: Tell us what the Harbour Trust said.

Mr. MURPHY: They said nothing.

The Premier: But they made an alteration.

Mr. MURPHY: In the face of all these protests they made an alteration, and it was agreed to on one condition, which had not been carried out since they published to the world that they would carry it out. In view of the protests the Fremantle Harbour Trust, endorsed by the Executive Council, published to the world

that in bad weather a pilot boat would cruise outside Rottneest.

Mr. Scaddan: How much would they see?

Mr. MURPHY: There was no use talking to the leader of the Opposition on this subject, because he knew as much about it as a pig did about a telegraph post.

Mr. Scaddan: I am trying to get information.

Mr. Underwood: The pig might get some white ants out of the telegraph post.

Mr. MURPHY: Captain Russell, who acted for many years as Harbour Master at Fremantle, vigorously protested against the change. This was the first protest that he (Mr. Murphy) had to make with regard to handing over a very important Government department to irresponsible control. Further than that he desired to talk about the present representation. If it was necessary to hand over such a department to irresponsible people (and he did not blame the present Government because they were only doing what the Labour Government and the James Government did before them) we should assure ourselves, if the commissioners had to represent interests, as to what interests had a right to representation.

Mr. Scaddan: Community of interests.

Mr. MURPHY: The leader of the Opposition might be informed what particular interests were represented on the Fremantle Harbour Trust at the present time. There was the Government nominee, who was chairman and represented the shipping companies in Fremantle, there was a representative of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, there was a representative of the Perth Chamber of Commerce, and the Government had to go to Kalgoorlie to find another representative and they selected a representative from the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Angwin: Do you know that the Labour Government never appointed commissioners?

Mr. MURPHY: But they endorsed the other appointments. Personally he was against representation of interests at all on such a concern as the Fremantle Harbour Trust. It was a Government con-

cern, and if the Government were not able to work it they should appoint paid commissioners and let them be responsible to Parliament for what they did. There was at least one body that had as much interest in that concern as either the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce or the shipping companies or even the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines. For years they had asked for and been promised representation on that Trust and it had been refused them. He referred to the representation of 600 men, who every day worked on the wharves at Fremantle as lumpers.

Mr. Scaddan: You have sufficient power to compel them to do it now.

Mr. MURPHY: There was another matter which he desired to call the attention of the Committee to, in order to show how inadvisable it was for this important public concern to be away from direct Ministerial control. He desired to refer to the treatment of the late wharfinger at Fremantle. This officer was under those who were not responsible to the House and not even responsible to the Minister, and there was no more dastardly treatment than that of this officer, who after having given eight years solid service to the State was passed out, and who had no chance of appeal. The matter had been placed before the Premier, but unfortunately neither the Premier nor the Colonial Secretary had any power to alter what had taken place. But he did say that one who had given eight solid years of service and had organised what had proved a gigantic success so far as the wharves in Fremantle were concerned, should not have been passed out as that officer had been in order to make room, not for any friend of the five commissioners, but for a friend of the secretary, who to-day was running the Fremantle Harbour Trust, whilst the five commissioners were simply nonentities. Where previously there had been order and contentment on the part of those who had to do business at the wharves, there was now chaos and discontent, and it was time for the Government to take a hand in that matter. There was much more that he could say on the question, but he was

not allowed to discuss the matter on the Estimates. The only thing he could do was to move an amendment to the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, so that the harbour could be placed under direct Ministerial control, from which it should never have been removed.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had been quite out of order in discussing that subject at this stage because there was no part of the Estimates which dealt with the expenditure of the Trust. They were an independent body acting under their own statute.

Mr. Murphy: I will discuss it again on the Loan Estimates.

The PREMIER: There could be no objection to the hon. member bringing the matter up and having it discussed in the House. At the present time he had no material with him which would enable him to answer any charges which might be made. The old standing question as to the pilots was a highly technical matter, and one which lay members could not be expected to adjudicate upon.

Mr. Murphy: Will you tell me on whose opinion you have acted in the past?

The PREMIER: It would be idle for a Minister to veto an arrangement made on the advice of his responsible expert officers, and the member for Fremantle would be the last to expect the Minister to take such a drastic action. The reports which he had before him showed that the Trust had had a very successful year.

Mr. Angwin: It was not their fault.

The PREMIER: Of course they could not have been successful if they had not had the trade, but the trade of the port had increased enormously.

Mr. Bolton: You admit that.

The PREMIER: In addition to admitting it he took some credit for it; the State was prospering and the trade of the port was increasing, largely owing to the policy of the present Government. He wanted the member for Murchison to clearly understand that he had not departed one iota from the custom that had been adopted ever since the Minister in charge of the Colonial Secretary's Department had been in another place. It had never been the custom in the Assembly

for a Minister who was in charge of the department to give an introductory address on the Colonial Secretary's Department. There was no act of discourtesy on his part. It could not be reasonably expected of a Minister not controlling a department to give in detail a statement of the work of that department. He was in a position to give members the information that had been supplied, but he could not deal with the details of departmental administration.

Mr. Holman: You should be in touch with the administration.

The PREMIER: If any specific charge was made against the administration a reply to it could be given.

Mr. Holman: The only time we can deal generally with the question of policy or legislation is now.

The PREMIER: The hon. member could deal with it on the Address-in-Reply or in any other debate. Until the hon. member put forward his queries, he could not expect him (the Premier) to give details of his colleague's policy.

Mr. Holman: We have his policy, we want to know yours.

The PREMIER: What the hon. member wanted was not at all clear. If specific information was asked for he would be pleased to answer him.

Mr. Holman: Well, are you going to bring in an amendment of the Arbitration Act?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Holman: Well, that is straight.

The PREMIER: There was no hope of bringing in an amendment of the Arbitration Act this session. To-day he had been discussing with the leader of the Opposition what business could be got through this session, and he was satisfied that there was no hope of bringing in an amendment of the Arbitration Act during the present session.

Mr. Holman: It should have been done years ago.

The PREMIER: Perhaps it should have been, but it must be admitted that the court had carried out its duties for four or five years without any amendment of the Act and it was not now going to come to a sudden standstill.

Mr. Heitmann: The judge has asked for an amendment several times.

The PREMIER: The judge had presided over that court for a number of years, and so had the Chief Justice for a short time, and until lately there had been no talk about an amendment of the Act. There was not going to be any harm done by allowing the Act to remain as it was until the next session of Parliament.

Mr. Heitmann: Let it go, the Labour Government will introduce an amending Act next session.

Mr. Murphy: Will the Premier state who was the expert who advised that the pilot station should be changed from Rott-nest to the river?

The PREMIER: If the hon. member asked a question in the ordinary way he would be pleased to answer him.

Mr. BATH: The Premier had made statements in reference to the necessity for amending the Arbitration Act, which it was desirable should be corrected. The position at the present time was that although we were supposed to have an Arbitration Act giving the advantages of industrial arbitration to employer and employee, the court was at present unable to arbitrate.

The Premier: Why?

Mr. BATH: Simply because the interpretations placed on the Act by the High Court and other courts limited the powers of the Arbitration Act in so many ways that on the statement of the President of the court, we had to revert to the old position by which, after taking evidence, the matter was ultimately left to the employer himself to determine.

The Premier: When was that interpretation given?

Mr. BATH: The first time it came under his notice had been in the case of the North Coolgardie miners, when Chief Justice Parker was President. That judge had laid it down that the court could only prescribe the wage for the least competent worker and that it had to be left to the employer to determine what wages were to be paid in an industry. The very object for which the court was established was to take out of the hands of both parties the fixing of the conditions of employment.

The Premier: The House intended to provided a minimum wage.

Mr. BATH: The intention had been that the arbitration court and the boards of conciliation should fix the wages and conditions. The next time that that decision had been given was in the case of the timber workers and then it had been repeated in connection with the tramway men when the President had stated that he had no power to determine certain conditions. That was the very thing that the Arbitration Act had been placed on the statute-books to prevent, but the Act could not fulfil what it had been intended to fulfil. Undoubtedly there were some industries in which the court, fixing what they called a minimum wage, had really fixed a standard wage, and these awards had given satisfaction and a large body of men were working under them to-day. Then again, under an industrial agreement, which could be registered under the Arbitration Act and could have all the force of an award, both parties could do what the president of the court could not do when they appealed to him. That was an unsatisfactory state of things and we would not have satisfactory industrial agreements until we had a court, with a scope equal to that of industrial agreements, as a last court of appeal if there was stiffness on the part of either party. If we could be sure that, failing agreement as to terms, the parties could appeal to the court and get a decision, we would have more satisfaction than at the present time. There had been various decisions such as that in the case in which it had been stated that the worker had a right to contract himself out of an award; the decision in the case of the Commissioner of Railways that if an employee had agreed to work for a lower wage in ignorance of the terms of the award, he could not recover the terms of the award; and other decisions which had practically destroyed the efficacy of the Arbitration Act and made it impossible to get industrial peace and contentment. It was not only the president of the court who manifested this need, but others who had had experience, until to-day there was a universal turning to the Federal Court as the only way out of the difficulty. If we

were to avoid interference with the right to appeal to the Arbitration Court, and the use of that right to appeal, we should bring our Arbitration Act up to date, and it should be altered in accordance with the wishes of the president and the desires of those who utilised it. It was to be hoped that time would be found, even this session, to effect some of the necessary amendments to make the Act more effective than it had proved during the past few years.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: On looking through the Estimates one noticed that the charity vote suffered a big reduction, amounting to considerably over £2,000. Possibly the Premier in giving information to the Committee would explain why the necessity existed for this huge reduction. We had heard on certain occasions that owing to the old-age pensions scheme this vote would be reduced, but it was found that there was a large number of people receiving aid from the charities vote who were not receiving pensions; therefore would the Premier explain away the reduction.

The Premier: Better times; not so much demand.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That was a matter of opinion. When prosperity came still charity had to be dispensed, and one regretted to see the reduction in the vote this year. As to arbitration, which showed an increase of £307 on the costs of the court, the Premier had pointed out very emphatically, in contradiction to his colleague's utterances that the matter was under consideration and would receive the serious consideration of the Government—

The Premier: It had received it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier stated to-night that there was absolutely no hope of an amendment of the Act.

The Premier: Not this session.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That meant practically not this Parliament. A ridiculous plea put forward when the president of the court said that the Act required amendment.

The Premier: I did not ridicule it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier did not take a serious view of the defects of the Act that other persons connected with



industrial matters took. On one occasion the engine-drivers were citing a case, and owing to the fact that a ruling had been given that the court could not cite a case unless the members of the society attended a meeting and voted not by proxy, the whole of the timber industry was paralysed for a week. In face of that the Premier said that there was no need for amendment this year, and there was no probability of an amendment next year. Another item to which he wished to refer was the increase to the president of the Central Board of Health. This was another instance of giving increases to those who were at the top of the tree. Right through the Estimates these increases were made in order to keep men who were at the top pacified.

The Premier: He was a good man.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: While not disparaging the efforts of good men in the service he desired to point out that men at the top were receiving handsome increases while those lower down were getting nothing.

The Premier: There was an amount of £17,000 in increases on the Estimates this year.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Another matter for consideration was the question of the Observatory. He would like to know if negotiations had been opened up with the Commonwealth to take over this institution?

The Premier: I communicated with them as promised, and the Commonwealth absolutely declined.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Were any reasons given?

The Premier: Just a short letter in reply.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Perhaps the Premier could come to some better arrangement by which the institution might be run more economically. One matter which would cause a great deal of discussion was that of the police. He believed the police in the outback portion of the State suffered under disabilities, especially those who were obliged to travel a good deal and did not receive sufficient travelling allowances to recoup them their expenses. One word on the immigration vote. Notwithstanding the fact that we

heard on many occasions that members on this side were prepared to disparage and deery their country, and to cry stinking fish to a large extent as to immigration, he (Mr. O'Loghlen) took exception to an article which had come under his notice and which had been published broadcast in the old country. Labour members had had occasion to place the true condition of the workers before the people in the old world, but he was prepared to hold out the hand of welcome to those coming over the sea so long as they did not come into competition with people here. The Labour party were prepared to go into a broad system of immigration provided there was occupation for immigrants when they arrived. The Premier should take some occasion to reply to the scandalous statements which had been made in an article supplied to the *Kilmarnock Standard*. Reference to the publication of this article was made in a newspaper published in Melbourne, which directed the attention "of Westralians of all parties to a gentleman of Katanning (Swan electorate) to whom truth was a stranger, and slander a pastime." There was no intention on his part to quote it in full because the case was such a poor one, and the misrepresentations were so glaring that he really believed people who had any knowledge of the conditions in Australia would not take any notice of these remarks. The paragraph in the *Melbourne* paper was to this effect:

This person has addressed a two-column letter to the *Kilmarnock Standard*, published in Scotland; he addresses himself from the Scots Church Manse, Katanning, and signs himself "J.S." The Premier might know who the gentleman is.

The Premier: I do not know him.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: He is the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Katanning. It goes on—

He declares that under adult suffrage in Australia respectable law-abiding citizens are at the mercy of the dissolute, thriftless, and criminal classes.

This article of two columns was published broadcast in the old country, and at the same time we were expending large sums of money trying to attract people to our shores. Possibly this gentleman had taken

his cue from the Premier, who once referred to gypsies and nomads who were perambulating the country.

The Premier: I never used the word "gypsies."

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It was the same thing; the hon. member used the term nomads.

The Premier: There is a great difference indeed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier might see a difference. This clergyman after saying that law-abiding citizens were at the mercy of the dissolute and criminal classes went on—

that of these ne'er-do-wells there are thousands in these parts, and nowhere more than in Western Australia.

He had not come across these criminals, and ne'er-do-wells, and it certainly ill became a gentleman who was wearing the cloth, and who by such utterances was a disgrace to the cloth, to slander the country in this way.

The Premier: Who wrote the article?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Rev. Smith, from the Scots Manse, Katanming. This clergyman went on—

It is said that in Australia political liberty is a farce, that the Labour party organises raids and boycotts and ruins opponents, that this policy and method is general, that no class of society is safe from its spite, and that he never saw such injustice, unfairness, and wantonness as in this country. The character of the Labour leaders—

I take it he refers to myself, as well as others.

The Premier: Are you a Labour leader?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not claim to be a leader.

The character of the Labour leaders is said to be such that when standing for Parliament they cannot get chairmen because no one can be found to honour such a position.

For himself he could declare that he had addressed more meetings in this country than most candidates, and he had been over practically the whole of Western Australia on two or three occasions, and he had never yet failed to get a chairman. He did not know whether any other can-

didate could say the same thing, yet this clergyman was prepared to slander this country, where he was earning his livelihood.

Mr. McDowall: It is to be hoped he is not coming back.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The man was here now; he had never gone away. He went on further—

and the mass of the people who vote "Labour" are referred to as exhibiting the awful stupidity of the rank and file.

There were two columns of similar stuff to this, and he was going to ask the Premier to take some action to prevent people, particularly clergymen, misrepresenting and libelling the country. The policy of the Government, no matter what Government might be in power, was to prevent this kind of thing. His (Mr. O'Loughlen's) attention had been drawn to a letter published by the British Immigration League of Australia, a body that was doing some little work towards encouraging immigration to Australia. This body referred to one difficulty which the Premier should take notice of; that was the difficulty of placing married couples with children throughout the country. In their letter the league stated—

Although there are always vacancies for married couples, without "encombrances" waiting to be filled, yet the man with children has more difficulty in obtaining work, no matter how willing or able he may be. This state of affairs is brought about by inadequate accommodation for the couples with children, and hence it is made difficult for the man and woman, who are doing their duty to the country they have come out to serve. Everyone realises that the young child of to-day will, in a few years, be a useful and valuable asset to the country, yet few appear to be willing to give the baby a chance to live. And this in a country where the cry is "More people."

In quoting this paragraph he wondered whether the League had sent circulars to every clergyman. What sort of a reception would such a circular get from the clergyman at Katanming, who had slandered the

country and the people in it? It was to be hoped the Premier, in dealing with the immigration vote, would inform the Committee whether he was prepared to take some action to stop people writing in the manner that had been done by the clergyman at Katanning. It was due to the Government to take action, and at least do something to suppress in the future the wowsieristic wails of this Katanning clergyman.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member could rest assured that he had had no knowledge of the article, extracts from which had been read.

**Mr. O'Loughlen:** What do you think of it?

**THE PREMIER:** It seemed to be rather disgraceful; or, at any rate, those portions which the hon. member had read. If the hon. member would let him have the article he would see whether it was possible to have recourse against the writer. The Crown Law Department might be able to advise the Government as to whether action could be taken. Members could rest assured that if there was one man who would stand up for his country, he (the Premier) was that man.

**Mr. A. A. Wilson:** The most wonderful thing about that letter was that it was published four miles from the birthplace of the present Prime Minister of Australia.

**THE PREMIER:** That was adding insult to injury.

**Mr. O'Loughlen:** It is no use spending money to attract immigrants and telling them in this way that we are criminals and thieves.

**THE PREMIER:** If the hon. member would let him have the extract he would see whether there was any power to interfere. The hon. member referred to the immigration vote, but he should be reminded that the vote on these Estimates was simply to pay the passage money of the wives and families of settlers in Western Australia from the Eastern States, and the amount was refunded. It was simply to make it easy to bring the relatives to Western Australia; it had nothing to do with the general vote, which of course appeared on the Loan Estimates.

**Mr. ANGWIN:** Of all the departments this was the one calling for the closest attention. There was no doubt the Colonial Secretary, though nominally controlling the department, was really controlled by his officers. To-day we might have had a flourishing sponge industry if the Colonial Secretary had controlled his department. There was no doubt that if the Colonial Secretary had but kept the promise made, if he had adhered to the terms he himself suggested, and had not allowed his officers to override him in the matter, we should have had at Fremantle or on the coast to-day a profitable sponge industry, giving employment to numbers and providing an excellent advertisement for Western Australia. But the Minister had left this matter in the hands of his officer who, after declaring that no sponges existed, declared the department had expended a large sum of money in proving the existence of the sponges. It was his (Mr. Angwin's) intention to put the member for Fremantle right in regard to the appointment of the Harbour Trust. The Harbour Trust had existed prior to the Chairman of Committees assuming office as Colonial Secretary in 1904, and the Harbour Trust of to-day had been appointed since the Chairman of Committees had left Ministerial office; therefore, although the Chairman of Committees when Colonial Secretary had desired to see all classes represented on that Trust he had not had the opportunity of carrying his desires into effect. The reason why all classes were not represented on the Harbour Trust was because the Colonial Secretary could not trust a representative of Labour to faithfully discharge the duties. So while we had the shipping interests, the mining interests and the commercial interests represented, the worker was debarred because the Colonial Secretary was of opinion that it might serve to subvert discipline among the staff. The Colonial Secretary had said it was considered that as a natural result of a representative of labour on the trust the sense of responsibility and power would be weakened, if not entirely destroyed, and instead of being a chief over his men the foreman would be subservient to them. The Col-

onial Secretary had also pointed out that the margin of profit was so small that if there was any danger of the foreman losing control over his men the margin would cease to exist. It went to show that while the Colonial Secretary could trust the shipping companies and the Chambers of Commerce and of Mines the Minister had no faith whatever in a representative of labour. He (Mr. Angwin) was pleased to say that the difficulty which had loomed largely before the eyes of the Harbour Trust a few weeks ago had been settled, principally by the action of the Premier.

The Premier: My colleague had most to do with it.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Premier's colleague had refused the request of the men until the Premier himself took the matter up. But it was not only in respect to the Harbour Trust that dissatisfaction existed; it existed right through this department. Last year the present Premier when in charge of these Estimates had promised that a board of appeal would be appointed in connection with the asylum, and that the Minister should appoint a board to look into any grievances. As far as could be learned no board whatever had been appointed. In connection with our gaols dissatisfaction, amounting almost to revolution, had existed for the last 12 months. A commissioner had been appointed to make inquiries, but as far as could be learned nothing further was done in this regard. He desired to know something of the special constables who had been appointed contrary to law during the last year. In his report the Auditor General had stated—

Special constables are appointed and the rate of pay fixed by the Commissioner of Police, although the Police Act requires the appointment shall be made by justices of the peace and the rate of pay fixed by the Minister. The Commissioner of Police contends that owing to the exigencies of service it is difficult to carry out the law.

For what purpose had these special constables been appointed? What services had they rendered, and what rate of wages did they receive? It was to be hoped also the Premier would be able to give the Committee some explanation in regard to

this further comment from the Auditor General's report in respect to the Claremont asylum—

In July, 1909, a staff ball was held at the Claremont Lunatic Asylum, and the entire cost was charged to the lunacy vote, and it is doubtful whether it applies. For instance, in addition to refreshments there were charges for cost of a special train, band fees, programmes, pencils, invitation cards, etcetera. The Minister approved of the debits.

Surely when the Committee had passed these Estimates last year there was no intention of providing the staff with a ball, and of paying for invitation cards and the cost of special train to take the staff—where? There was no necessity for a special train to take the staff away from the asylum, they were engaged there, several of them lived on the premises, and the rank and file were compelled to live close to the asylum. This was a matter in regard to which the Minister should give the Committee some satisfaction. If the staff at the asylum wished to hold a ball they should pay for it out of the large salaries provided in the lunacy vote. Perhaps that was the reason why the officer in charge of the institution had received a £50 increase during the last year. Another complaint which he desired to make was in regard to the Minister's action so far as the hospitals were concerned. The Minister had placed the full control of public hospitals in the hands of a board, which was supposed to be appointed in February of each year, but an alteration had been made and the appointments were not now gazetted in accordance with the Act. He would like to know whether the boards were appointed in conformity with the hospital laws that were at present in existence, or in anticipation of other laws. In regard to the treatment of infectious cases, the Minister had promised a deputation that such cases would be paid for by the State and not charged to the local authorities, but despite that promise the local authorities had been billed with the costs of those cases. It seemed that it would be useless to take any notice of the Colonial Secretary's promises. As a matter of fact he had no intention, as a

rule, of carrying out his promises when he made them: if he had, he would not have promised a deputation that he would not charge the local authorities with the treatment of infectious cases and then have allowed the hospitals to bill the local authorities later on. In regard to the Charities Department, the officer in charge was a gentleman who looked well after his department: he was a man who sympathised with those who wanted assistance, and no just application made to him for relief was refused. No doubt the charities vote was one that was very necessary: but he had expected to see a larger decrease on account of the Commonwealth old-age pensions having come into existence. We could not get away from the fact that the State had not been relieved to that extent which some people had anticipated. As a matter of fact in his opinion, a large number of the old people would much sooner have continued under the care of the State than have come under the Old-age Pensions Act. In conclusion, he wanted to inform the Minister that when the items were reached, it was his intention to ask for information on the points to which he had referred.

Mr. PRICE: Whilst not intending to occupy much of the time of the Committee in the general discussion on the Estimates for the Colonial Secretary's Department, he desired to indicate to the Minister in charge certain matters upon which he desired some definite information. Some time ago when an effort had been made to secure all necessary information for the purpose of bringing into existence a harbour trust at Albany, so as to better control the trade of that port, he had met with considerable difficulty in securing even the very small amount of data which had been placed at his disposal. A great deal more information was required and he would like to hear from the Minister whether or not the department had any objection to the establishment of harbour boards in the chief ports of the State. They were in existence at the present time in Fremantle and Bunbury, and he could see no reason why Albany and Geraldton too, if the local people so desired it, should not have the same privileges. Another matter to which he de-

sired to draw attention was in connection with the administration of the Fisheries Department. At the present time there were certain regulations which pressed unduly upon the settlers, and he found that settlers who were taking up land on the banks of rivers, which were teeming with fish, were absolutely precluded from taking any of those fish for their own personal consumption without paying a license fee. He could point out one particular district, that along the Kalgan river, which was fairly teeming with fish, but the inspector was continually harassing the people and preventing them from catching fish for their own use.

The Premier: With lines?

Mr. PRICE: No.

The Premier: I expect it is closed to netting.

Mr. PRICE: The river was not closed to netting. The Act, of course, provided that people must pay a certain license fee before they could fish with nets, but seeing that the people only required to net for their own private consumption—

The Premier: The Kalgan river is closed altogether to net fishing.

Mr. PRICE: Then in the interests of the settlers, many of whom found it very hard to get meat and were struggling for a living, might he ask why that river should be closed at all?

The Premier: In the interests of breeding.

Mr. PRICE: The Government closed the Kalgan river to netting, but allowed fishermen to use two miles of net in the inlet at Denmark, with the result that to-day all fish had been practically swept out of that sheet of water. That was the action of a Government who were always boasting of their desire to help the settlers.

The Premier: Do you want all the fish taken out of the Kalgan river?

Mr. PRICE: No, but there should be a little justice to the settlers and they should be given some opportunity of securing a little food.

The Premier: Denmark is closed too.

Mr. PRICE: There was a firm sending half a ton of fish to Kalgoorlie two or three times a week from Denmark.

The Premier: Then they are breaking the law.

Mr. PRICE: No good service could be rendered by closing the Kalgan river. The river should not be thrown open for indiscriminate fishing by fishermen for sale, but there could be restrictions on the mesh of the net used. If the settlers were compelled to fish by lines only it would mean that they must leave the work of developing their holdings in order to go to the river to catch fish. They should be given the opportunity of netting fish for their own private consumption. Why the Immigration and Tourists and General Information Bureau was brought into existence was somewhat of a mystery. The department was not going in any way outside the beaten tracks of the old Immigration Bureau. Its efforts were concentrated on the caves at Busselton, but there were other spots in Western Australia besides these caves. Albany district was absolutely neglected by the department. Information was needed on this point, and also in regard to the comments by the Auditor General on the Police Department.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I wish to speak generally.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier had already replied to the general discussion. Hon. members were allowed to speak afterwards, but it was not anticipated they would speak at length.

The PREMIER: There was no desire to stop discussion, but hon. members would have the opportunity on each vote to raise points mentioned to-night. It was arranged with the leader of the Opposition to report progress and adjourn the House as soon as an item was reached.

Mr. Heitmann: I wish to speak on Item 1.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member call Item 1?

Mr. Heitmann: Yes.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st December, 1910.

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Plans of proposed railway, Katanning to Nampup. 2, Report of Commissioner of Taxation for the year ended 30th June, 1910.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. J. E. Dodd on account of ill health.

### BILL—LICENSING.

Report of Committee, after recommitment, adopted.

### BILL—HEALTH.

*In Committee.*

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair.

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment—

*That the following new subclause be added:—"The Governor may at any time after the passing of this Act make any such appointment of officers, to take effect upon the coming into operation of this Act, as he might have made if this Act had come into operation at the passing thereof."*

The reason for the amendment was to make it clear that it would not be necessary to reappoint the officers in the Health Department in consequence of the passing of this measure. There was a doubt about the matter and to make it clear and so that there should be no break in the continuity it was considered advisable to insert the amendment.