

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th January, 1911.

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

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Papers, Reports, Charts, etc., in connection with the construction of an Outer Harbour at Fremantle. (Ordered on motion by Mr. Murphy.)

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture and Industries to 30th June, 1910. 2, Report of the Caves Board to 30th June, 1910.

## QUESTIONS (3)—COLLIE COAL MINES.

### *Proprietary Colliery Disaster.*

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, In view of the recent disaster (December 27th, 1910) at the Collie Proprietary Colliery, whereby two miners lost their lives, and the lives of many other miners were seriously imperilled, and further, the repeated warnings given by me on the floor of the House and elsewhere on the dangers of fire and water caused by the foolishly indiscriminate and inefficient extraction of the pillars, etc., at mines in the Collie coalfields district, especially the Collie Proprietary Colliery, will the Minister appoint a board of in-

quiry, consisting of practical coal-mining experts and a first-class certificate of competency coal-mining inspector (from another State) with a thorough knowledge of gases incidental to coal-mining to be chairman, to investigate and report upon the causes of the late deplorable accident; the said board of inquiry to have full power to minutely examine and report on the poisonous gases of Collie coalfields and the apparent danger of the flooding of the Collie Proprietary Colliery from the waters of the Collie river, and the apathy shown by the officials in charge? 2, Will the Minister appoint such board of inquiry to sit within one month from date?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I shall be prepared to consider the question of appointing a special board of inquiry when the evidence given at the inquest on the victims of the recent accident at Collie, together with the reports of the State Mining Engineer, the Government Analyst, and the inspector of mines are available.

### *Inspector's Certificate.*

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: Has the coal-mining inspector at Collie a first-class certificate of competency or a first-class certificate of service to be a colliery manager or coal-mining inspector. If a certificate of competency, where was it issued and the date of issue; if a certificate of service, where was it issued and the date of such issue?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The inspector of mines at Collie holds a first-class mine manager's certificate of Service under "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902." It was issued at Perth on 5th March, 1903.

### *Accident Relief Fund.*

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is Mr. Briggs, inspector of mines at Collie, the chairman of trustees of the Coal Mines Accident Relief Fund? 2, Do the Government, who nominate the chairman of trustees of the Accident Relief Fund, contribute to such fund? 3, Has Mr. Briggs, as inspector of mines, the right to sign or refuse to sign a

worker's claim for accident relief pay, and can he afterwards, as chairman of trustees, sign or refuse to sign the cheques for payment, or otherwise, of such worker's claim? If so, does the Minister consider this system in the best interests of justice? 4, How many trustees are now operating on the fund, and how many of them have signed the last cheques for payment, and their names?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No; only the men and the owners contribute. 3, (a.) Yes; in common with the manager or other official of the mine, as provided by Regulation 10. (b.) Regulation 8 provides that all moneys withdrawn from the trust account shall be paid by the trustees to every person injured or to the relatives in accordance with the direction and under the approval of the accident committee. 4 (a) One with the secretary. (b) One with the secretary. (c) T. Briggs.

#### QUESTION — SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION.

Mr. TROY (for Mr. Horan) asked the Premier: 1, Did he offer any suggestion to his Ministers regarding the advisability of some member of the Cabinet meeting the members of the Scottish Commission at Albany? 2, Is he aware that the gentlemen deputed to act as guides, whatever their other attainments might be, displayed unquestionable ignorance of the geography of this State? 3, Will the Minister take prompt steps to remedy this blunder in the interests of Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No; but all necessary and suitable arrangements were made for the reception of the Commission. 2, The Commission is being guided through the State by Professor Lowrie and other officers of the Agricultural Department, who are well qualified for that duty. 3, The arrangements are satisfactory, and need no alteration.

#### QUESTION—TIMBER TROUBLE, LAKESIDE.

Mr. TROY (for Mr. Scaddan) asked the Premier: 1, Whether the statements contained in the following telegram re-

ceived by me this day are correct:—"Fire-wood workers all stopped. Lakeside company have brought the bush stores into Lakeside, other companies threaten to do same. This will leave cutters who want to stand by their wood and remain in the bush without food or water"? 2, If so, will he see that the men who are compelled to remain by their property are properly provided for?

The PREMIER replied: 1, I cannot state whether the information contained in the telegram received by the hon. member is correct, or otherwise, but I wired to-day to Mr. Hedges as follows:—"Statement has been made in House by Leader of Opposition that companies are leaving woodcutters without supplies, and Mr. Scaddan has asked whether Government will see that men who remain by their wood are properly provided for. Stop. Reply urgently are companies prepared to bring in all wood if men will handle same." I am in receipt of his reply, reading:—"Empty wagons were supplied, as usual; men refused to load. Companies are now and always have been ready to bring in all wood if men will handle. Trains have been running daily since men stopped work. To ensure proper attention horses are being brought down to main siding. Companies have given men notice that unless work proceeds running will be discontinued as soon as live stock is removed. Companies' interest in wood on line is more than equal to the cutters' interest." 2, The Government does not propose to take any action.

#### QUESTION — PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it the Government's intention to work the phosphate deposits at Namban and Jurien bay? 2, If so, when is it intended to commence operations? 3, If the Government do not intend to work the deposits departmentally will they be let by tender? 4, If by tender, when?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Not at present. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The department has been,

and is, open to receive offers for working the deposits. 4, Answered by No. 3.

# QUESTION — LAND RESUMPTION FOR RAILWAY PURPOSES, PERTH.

Mr. TROY (for Mr. Angwin) asked the Minister for Works: What is the estimated value of the land and buildings the Government intend to resume for railway purposes in the city of Perth?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The valuations are not yet complete, but, if they were, it would be detrimental to public interests to supply this information when it might be used against the Government by private property owners.

# BILL — BRIDGETOWN-WILGARRUP RAILWAY EXTENSION.

## *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I desire to point out the extension is one of three miles only. Recently the Tender Board called tenders for 6,000 loads of sawn karri for truck building. There was but one tender received, namely, that of Mr. Lyall of Argyle, at the rate of 75s. per load on trucks at Wilgarrup. Subsequently communications took place between the tenderer and the Railway Department, as the result of which an offer was made to the Department to reduce the price of these 6,000 loads by 10s. per load on condition that an extension of not exceeding three miles of this railway was made.

Hon. Sir N. J. Moore: What was the tender price?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tender price was 75s., and a reduction was offered of 10s. per load for the 6,000 loads, representing a saving of £3,000 to the Railway Department on this one contract alone and, of course, the possibility of cheaper timber from that source for any future supplies. In addition to that there are certain Government lands possessing very fair timber available somewhere near the same locality.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How much country has Lyall to operate on?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I could not give particulars of his timber area. However, the Railway Department, in order to save this £3,000 and to reduce the cost of future supplies of karri for their truck building, strongly recommended that this railway should be extended. After due consideration by Cabinet it was decided that it would be a good commercial undertaking on the part of the Government to make this small extension. The Bill therefore proposes to give the authority. The extension will be made on the line of route to be taken by the ultimate and longer extension of this line in the direction of Denmark and Albany. As far as Wilgarrup the railway is being constructed departmentally and it is desirable, if Parliament sees its way to give the authority for this extension, that it should be given early, before the plant and the men are withdrawn from the work. The gauge, of course, is the usual one, and 45-pound rails will be used. The sleepers will be 6ft. 6in. by 8in. by 4in., and the ruling gradient one in 40, with the sharpest curve 12 chains radius. The estimated cost of construction is £4,200, and of rails and fastenings £2,000, or a total of £6,200, giving an average of £2,066 per mile. Under the circumstances I have narrated I think I am fully warranted in asking the House to agree to the second reading of this Bill. I move—

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

On motion by Mr. O'Loughlen, debate adjourned.

# BILL—KATANNING-NAMPUP RAILWAY.

## *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: There is a number of railway Bills in consecutive order on the Notice Paper, all of them running East or partially East from the Great Southern Railway, and I should like to ask the indulgence of the House that in making a second reading speech I may make it in regard to the several Bills together.

They will be closely connected, and it will save my travelling over the same ground several times. If the House will so indulge me I will be glad to proceed in that way.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Is it the wish of the House that the hon. member be permitted to move in the manner proposed?

**Mr. Johnson:** Before any decision is arrived at I would like to know how hon. members are to continue with the debate?

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Each motion will be taken separately, but I shall make only the one second reading speech.

**Mr. HOLMAN:** I think the Minister can do as he desires without the indulgence of the House. If he gives us all the necessary information it will remain for the House to decide whether that information is satisfactory. Before the Minister speaks I may say I hope the information to be given in regard to these lines will be much better than that given in regard to other lines we have previously dealt with. The Minister can move the second reading of this Bill, and at the same time give information in regard to the other lines.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I take it from the remarks of hon. members there is no objection to my doing so. I shall deal with the whole matter in one speech, and then move the second reading of the Katanning-Nampup Railway Bill.

**Hon. Sir N. J. MOORE:** It seems to me that each is a distinct proposition and has distinct information relating to it; and, while the general remarks so far as the policy are concerned, may apply equally to the whole of the proposals, still it is absolutely essential that the information concerning each distinct proposition should be brought out. In these circumstances I do not know that the Minister is going to save any time. So far as the cost is concerned the figures will have to be given separately for each proposal.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In moving the second reading of this Bill for the construction of a railway from

Katanning to Nampup, I wish to point out that for some years this House has recognised the necessity of providing for the expansion of the agricultural industry by constructing lines in those districts where either settlement has already taken place to a large extent, or where, by opening up the country, there is a possibility of stimulating, encouraging, and developing settlement. The House has been entirely justified in its policy of constructing agricultural railways by the results which have followed that policy. As a citizen of this State, I can remember the time when the idea that Western Australia would ever become an agricultural producer was simply laughed at, and I can remember that later as a member of Parliament I found there was very great scepticism in Parliament itself and in the large centres of population, both around the metropolis and on the gold-fields, with regard to the possibility of agricultural development in Western Australia. That scepticism has had to give way to the hard logic of fact, and Western Australia has for some years been rapidly forging ahead in agricultural production at a rate which can only be regarded as marvellous, considering the small population that the State possesses. I may perhaps be allowed to give some figures in regard to agricultural development, although in doing so I shall be trespassing to some extent on the domain of my colleague, the Minister for Lands. However, I shall not make more than very brief references. I have taken out the figures for a ten years' term and I find that in 1900 there was under crop a total of 201,333 acres in the whole of the State; the production of that area was 774,653 bushels of wheat, 86,433 bushels of oats, 29,188 bushels of barley, and 103,813 tons of hay. In 1905 the acreage under crop had increased from the 201,338 acres to 364,704 acres, the wheat production had grown to 2,013,237 bushels, oats to 226,318 bushels, barley to 37,332 bushels, and hay to 113,794 tons. In 1910 after another interval of five years, the total area under crop had nearly doubled, the figures being 722,086 acres, yielding 5,602,368 bushels of wheat, 1,248,162 bushels of oats, 101,673 bushels of barley,

and 195,182 tons of hay. For 1911 the estimate is that the wheat will reach 7,594,264 bushels, and oats 1,121,865 bushels, whilst barley and hay I do not think I need quote, as the figures are not very different from those of last season. Concurrent with this growth in the acreage cultivated, there has been for the years under review a satisfactory improvement in the average production. The wheat average, which in 1900 was 10.42 bushels, was in 1905 11.06 bushels and in 1910, 12.48 bushels. In regard to the importation and exportation of agricultural produce, the figures are again very much in favour of the State. I have been unable to separate grain, flour, oats, bran, malt, pollard, potatoes, and onions, and the figures, therefore, are not as clear, so far as the products of this State are concerned, as one might wish. In 1900 the total value of these imports was £269,170, and of the exports £581; and in 1905 the imports were £341,141 and the exports £8,850. In 1909 the imports represented £236,585 and the exports had grown to £139,705, whilst in the present year, counting ten months only, the imports were £139,994 of which only £375 represented wheat and £265 chaff, whilst the exports had again jumped to the total of £419,556. This shows that if the State has been doing something for agriculture, agriculture has been doing a great deal for the State, and it is necessary that members in dealing with any agricultural railway proposition should bear in mind that fact. Another consideration that has some bearing on this question of the construction of railways in country districts is the fact that of recent years it has been deemed advisable to considerably advance the prices charged for agricultural land, and consequently the settlers, who got the advantages of the construction of these lines, are giving in that way, indirectly if not directly, a very substantial *quid pro quo* to the State for what it is doing for them. A fear has sometimes been expressed that the Government or Parliament might be inclined to rush too rapidly into these developmental public works. I desire to say, however, that there is no reason to fear anything of that sort, and I want to

draw attention to the fact that although we have been constructing railways at a fairly rapid rate during the past few years, that rate has not, in any measurable degree, exceeded the growth of our population. I have some figures touching on this subject which I have taken from the report of the Commissioner of Railways. In the year ended 30th June, 1900, Western Australia had a mile of railways for every 127 of its population; in 1905 the population per rail mile had grown to 152, whilst in 1910 the population per rail mile was 130, or a difference of three per rail mile in favour of 1910 as against 1900. The capital invested in railways per head of population was in 1900 £40, in 1905 £40, and in 1910 only £41. The expenditure on railways per head of population was in 1900 £5, in 1905 £5.15, and in 1910 it had fallen to £3.94, so that, although the capital invested in our railways has slightly increased in proportion to the population, the actual annual expenditure has diminished. The passengers per head of population represented in 1900 36.13, in 1905 48.59, and in 1910 47.34. The goods per head of population were in 1900 8.03; in 1905, 10.02; and in 1910, 8.89. I have given these figures to show that there is nothing in the nature of a rapid reckless rush in the proposal to construct new agricultural railways. Whilst it is very necessary that in showing confidence and courage we should avoid rashness and recklessness, it is equally advisable that in showing cautiousness we should shun cowardice, and this House would be as wrong in rushing into undue cautiousness as it would be in rushing into extravagance, in order to show courage and confidence in the resources of the State. It might be well for the House to consider the results of the agricultural lines which have already been constructed. I have therefore taken the trouble to compile a few figures in regard to them, and I may say that these figures are exceedingly satisfactory. We have ten agricultural lines at present in the hands of the Railway Department and the figures in regard to them are as follows:—Goomalling-Dowlerin railway—working expenses, £2,028, interest £796, total £2,825. The earnings

for the last financial year were £3,793, showing a profit of £968 over working expenses and interest. On the Donnybrook-Boynup line the working expenses were £4,632, the interest £3,019, making a total of £7,652 for working expenses and interest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is that an agricultural railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a railway in an agricultural district. I have not carefully separated the lines, but it is partially agricultural at all events.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The "nomads" have been keeping it going.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope they will keep all these new agricultural lines going later on by ceasing to be "nomads." The total expenditure for working expenses and interest on that line was £7,652, while the earnings amounted to £8,628, or a profit of £976.

Mr. Holman: How much of that was from timber?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not the details. The hon. member will realise it is impossible for me to have them. I would gladly excise this line from my return. It is not essential to the argument I am endeavouring to bring forward that these lines have succeeded sufficiently well in the past to warrant our confidence in undertaking them in the present.

Mr. Troy: If it was not a timber line, you would have to excise it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say I am quite willing to excise these figures from my return.

Mr. Troy: Because otherwise there would be a loss on the line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am quite willing to drop the argument so far as that line is concerned. On the Greenhills-Quairading line the expenses amounted to £2,406, and the interest to £1,805, or a total of £4,212. The earnings amounted to £3,289, showing a difference against the line of £923. On the Katanning-Kojonup line the working expenses amounted to £1,939, and the interest to £1,611, or a total of £3,551. The earnings amounted to £2,023, or a differ-

ence against the line of £1,528. On the Narrogin-Wickepin line the working expenses amounted to £1,625, and the interest to £1,491, making a total of £3,116. The earnings amounted to £2,054, or a difference against the line of £1,062. I suppose I ought to excise the Pinjarra-Dwellingup line.

Mr. Troy: Nomads again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give it because it is included in these figures. Hon. members will see that what acts in favour of my return in one case acts against it in another, still I have included all the lines. On the Pinjarra-Dwellingup line the working expenses were £629, and the interest amounted to £449, making a total of £1,078. The earnings amounted to £624, or a difference against the railway of £453. I may point out the Pinjarra-Dwellingup line has been opened only six months. On the Torbay-Denmark line the working expenses were £1,223, and the interest amounted to £890, or a total of £2,113. The earnings amounted to £1,473, or a difference against the railway of £640. On the Toodyay-Bolgart line, which has only been opened for four months, the working expenses amounted to £856, and the interest to £832, making a total of £1,689. The earnings amounted to £488, or a difference against the railway of £1,201. On the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway the working expenses were £1,874, and the interest amounted to £1,238, making a total of £3,113. The earnings were £2,435, or a difference against the railway of £677. On the Wonnerup-Nannup line—here again I do not know whether the hon. member will argue that I should exclude it also—the working expenses were £3,638, and the interest was £1,739, making a total of £5,378. The earnings amounted to £5,307, or a difference against the line of £70. These figures may at first sight appear somewhat bad against the lines I have quoted. The gross result is that the earnings of the lines I have quoted have been £30,118, and the gross working expenses £20,855. In other words there has been a balance of earnings over working expenses to the extent of £9,263, as against the amount of in-

terest to be paid, £13,876, leaving a net loss on all these lines of £4,613. Now, in regard to these lines I desire to point out—and hon. members, I think, will recognise the force of it—that we cannot expect satisfactory results in the first year or two through the construction of a line in newly settled country or in comparatively unsettled country. We must give time for the land to be cleared, and we must give time for the land after being cleared to be brought under cultivation; and where working settlers are concerned, it is of course quite impossible for a man having a thousand acres to bring more than, say, about 10 per cent. of his area under crop within the first two or three years. There must be a reasonably long period allowed before it can be expected that any one individual shall be utilising to the fullest extent the whole area of which he may be possessed. During this time from year to year we expect the railways being constructed to be at the outset, perhaps, paying working expenses and little or nothing more; but if a railway at the outset can pay working expenses, or something near working expenses, in a good agricultural district then with the increase of settlement and with the additional cultivation gone in for by existing settlers, we have every reason to be satisfied that in the comparatively early future very substantial profits will result directly from the lines in addition to those indirect profits which are so valuable to the State, especially the making land settlement possible in districts which could not be settled unless railway communication were given. It is not necessary to push that argument any further. Those hon. members who have become land settlers will recognise—some of them have found by practical experience—the actual impossibility of putting any large area under crop in less than two or three years, and they will admit, therefore, that it cannot be expected in a district which is only newly settled, or which is, to a large extent, going to be settled as the result of railway communication, that we shall start off by showing a profit immediately; but

the figures I have quoted in regard to these railway lines already constructed give us every reason to look with confidence to a proposition to construct a line in any district where the soil is reasonably good and the rainfall is satisfactory. I think that we should bear in mind also, in dealing with these railway propositions, the fact that during the past two or three years a large number of people have taken up land in our different agricultural districts on the understanding that railways would be provided for them by Parliament.

Mr. Johnson: In many cases you are shifting the routes away from them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know of any cases.

Mr. Johnson: I will give you one or two in these Bills.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I will be very pleased to discuss the matter with the hon. member; but the point I am anxious to make is that Parliament itself is practically committed to this policy of agricultural development by means of light railways, and the only question, therefore, that has to be considered when a proposition is brought forward is as to the merit of the district to which it refers and the order of priority to which that district may be entitled. Of course, in a mere authority like I am now asking for for the construction of a railway, the order of priority cannot at all be settled, because Parliament is now asked merely to agree to the principle that a railway shall be made between Katanning and Nampup and is not asked to agree that that railway shall be constructed within any given length of time. After the Bill has been passed, assuming it is passed, then, of course, it will be the duty of the Government to recommend to Parliament an appropriation of money for the purpose of carrying out the work; and it is when the appropriation is made for the purpose of any construction that the House, if it desires, can give attention to the relative priority that should be accorded to the different lines. Following up the reference I made a little while ago to the fact that a large contribution in cash is made by the holders of land in

these agricultural districts in the shape of increased payments for their land, I want to point out that the area opened for selection and governed by the five lines I hope to bring before the consideration of members to-day, is no less than 2,345,362 acres. Hon. members will readily see that there is every reason to expect that these railways will, in the stimulus that they give to settlement, actually more than pay the capital cost of construction.

Mr. Troy: What is the anticipated production during the year; what is the area under crop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will give that information a little later in regard to each line. In considering the area under crop, hon. members must bear in mind that there are large areas that cannot be brought under crop until railway communication is given, and that outside a certain distance it is impossible economically and profitably to cultivate the land at all. There must be means of access to the market, or the land, no matter how highly productive it may be, is absolutely valueless to the settler. On the understanding that there would be railway communication to the different districts east of the Great Southern Railway there have been a large number of applications for, and selections of land, and the total area within the last year or two taken up east of the Great Southern is somewhere about 558,797 acres. These areas have all been selected on the understanding that railways would be provided. I do not think it is necessary for me to say more than I have said in regard to the general principle of railway construction in the agricultural areas. I shall therefore proceed now to deal directly with the particular line first on the list, the Katanning-Nampup line. This line will have a length of 38 miles; its gauge will be 3ft. 6in.; the sleepers will be 6ft. 6in. by 8in. by 4in.; the ruling grade will be one in 40 and the sharpest curve 15 chains. In regard to the ruling grade, the department always endeavour to secure, if it can economically be done, a grade of not more than one in 60; but it cannot always be done without en-

hancing the cost of the line considerably; and in that case, of course, the more difficult grade of one in 40 has to be taken. In this case, therefore, the grade is one in 40. The cost of construction is estimated at £37,000, and the rails and fastenings at £25,000 making a total of £62,000, or £1,631 per mile. With regard to the cost of construction, hon. members may perhaps notice that it is somewhat larger than that of the railway proposals which were submitted to the House last year, and this increase is due to the fact that both material and labour have advanced in price. Therefore, it is quite impossible owing to these advances in the cost of sleepers and labour to construct further railways at the cost which was estimated for similar lines 12 months ago. There is also a slight increase at the present time in the cost of rails and fastenings, but that may not be permanent. There is every reason to believe, however, that the increased cost of sleepers and labour will be permanent, and of course the estimates with regard to all these lines must therefore be made on this basis. In the area that will be served by the Katanning-Nampup line, taking a 15-mile radius, and of course not allowing for the area to be served by the existing Great Southern line, there is 325,000 acres, of which 170,000 acres are alienated, and 365,000 acres are vacant. The wheat lands are estimated to aggregate 260,000 acres. There are altogether 130 resident occupiers, who conjointly hold 110,000 acres, of which 13,000 acres are under cultivation. There have been 18,000 acres cleared and 35,500 acres ringbarked. The sheep owned by these occupiers, who will be adjacent to the railway, total 7,089.

Mr. Foulkes: Last year the Minister had all these particulars printed and circulated among members.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will circulate this information among hon. members. I was under the impression until to-day that this had been done, but, having found out that it has not been done, I will see that hon. members get the information supplied to them immediately. The average yield last year was 15 bushels; the soil is generally grey



loam with rich chocolate belts. Clearing costs from 15s. to 25s. per acre, and the rainfall is about 20 inches. The land already alienated is held almost entirely in small holdings; there are no pastoral leases. There were two subdivisions thrown open recently by the Lands Department at Badgepup and Nampup aggregating 40,000 acres, and they were fully applied for. The Lands Department report that this line will tap a magnificent wheat belt running from Lime Lake, and traced onwards to Lake Dumbleyung, thence to Bullock Hills, across to Coblinine River to Coomelbirrup, following the river up to Lake Ewlymartup, thence to Broomehill and right on to the Salt River towards Ravensthorpe. Returning to Coomelbirrup there is the same rich belt continued to Dyliabing, Warrnaminup, Rockwell, Badgepup, Yellanup, Nampup, and Correnup. It is certain that rich belts occur right on to the Eastern Goldfields, and it is therefore quite possible that it may be necessary to ask for a further extension of this line at no distant period. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. Troy, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—TAMBELLUP-ONGERUP RAILWAY.

##### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I desire to point out that the resident occupiers who will be served by this railway in the vicinity of Gnowangerup number 144, and they represent a population of 350 individuals. The area which will be influenced by the line is no less than 943,774 acres; the area held by residents is 269,294 acres, of which 14,000 acres are under cultivation, 17,329 cleared, and about 184,000 acres ringbarked. The estimated additional area likely to be under cultivation next year is 11,056 acres. The average yield last season was 13 bushels of wheat, and 35 bushels of oats. The land available

for selection is no less than 667,000 acres. There are eight comparatively large holdings in the vicinity of the line, but they total only 17,619 acres, and therefore their size is not very excessive. There is an area of 20,000 acres leased for pastoral purposes. The average rainfall is 16 to 18 inches, and the catchment is good. There was some land recently thrown open at Ongerup, and it was fully applied for, those who were in search of land there being well satisfied with the class of country. The timbers there are morrel, jam, moart and mallee scrub. The cost of clearing is estimated at 15s., which would be in the mallee scrub, to 30s. per acre. There is a large area South of this land suitable for grazing purposes. The mallee country, it is believed, can properly be placed under crop.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How much sandplain is there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This mallee country would be largely sandplain, but it is estimated that it can be advantageously used. The hon. member must know that a large proportion of sandplain in the State is capable of being taken up and utilised. Fully 300,000 acres will grow wheat and oats, and when developed will carry one sheep to an acre and a half. The line as proposed will be 55 miles in length having a ruling gradient of 1 in 60. The cost of construction is estimated at £50,000 in addition to the rails and fastenings which will cost £36,000, a total of £86,000, and representing a cost per mile of £1,564. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. Price, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—WAGIN-DUMBLEYUNG RAILWAY EXTENSION.

##### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: I wish to point out that the length of the proposed line is 23 miles, and that the grade will be 1 in 40, and

the cost of construction is estimated at £21,000, plus rails and fastenings £13,000, a total of £36,000, or an average per mile of £1,565. There are at present 110 resident occupiers who hold 70,000 acres. Of this area 7,000 acres are under cultivation, 9,000 acres have been cleared, and it is anticipated that there will be an additional 12,000 acres under cultivation next year. The average yield last season was 15 bushels of wheat, 25 bushels of oats, and 22 cwt. of chaff per acre. The area served would altogether comprise 415,264 acres. It is estimated that the first-class land totals 150,000 acres, and the remainder of the country is supposed to have very good possibilities. It consists largely of mixed mallee and broom but its actual value has yet to be demonstrated. At the present time some settlers have to cart no less than 30 miles, and I am sorry to say they have to do this carting over wretched roads.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some will have to cart a long way even when the railway is built.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government cannot be expected to build a railway to every man's boundary.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You can do better.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The principal timber in the district is morrel, salmon gum, jam, and mallee. Clearing costs from 15s. to 20s. per acre; the soil is a good red loam to light loam. The rainfall is about 14 inches; this was taken at Pingarny Hills. There is available for pastoral leases 148,274 acres. There are at present no large holdings, neither are there any pastoral leases adjacent to the proposed line. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. Troy, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—QUAIRADING-NUNAJIN RAILWAY.

##### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: This measure is for a railway from Quairading to Nunajin, a length of

50 miles. The grade is 1 in 40, and the cost of construction is estimated at £41,000 in addition to rails and fastenings £33,000, making a total of £74,000, which represents £1,480 per mile. The proposed line is an extension of the existing line from York to Quairading, and is intended to junction with the Wickepin-Merredin line at Nunajin, a distance of 50 miles. The area to be served will be 433,000 acres, of which 259,000 acres have been alienated, and will include 200,000 acres of first class wheat land. The route has been sketched in this case somewhat nearer to the goldfields line than 25 miles, because of the fact that the bulk of the good land lies to the north and the proposed route will improve facilities for settlers on the Jennaberring and Kwolyin areas which will be fully taken up and settled, and where a large proportion of settlers have already made substantial improvements. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. Troy, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—WICKEPIN-MERREDIN RAILWAY.

##### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) in moving the second reading said: This Bill authorises the construction of a railway from Wickepin to Merredin, having a length of 120 miles, with a ruling grade of one in 60. The estimated cost of construction is £121,000 plus £78,000 for rails and fastenings, or a total cost of £199,000, representing an average cost of £1,658 per mile.

Mr. Johnson: Are you building a light line, then?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I may point out that the grade is a good one, and that, of course, increases the cost somewhat.

Mr. Johnson: What is the use of a good grade and a light engine?

Mr. Collier: One in 60 is not a specially good grade.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is better than several to which I have had to draw attention. Hon. members, I

think, generally agree in regard to the necessity for this line. It is proposed to join up the Eastern and the Great Southern lines, and it will make a through connection between the goldfields and the South-Western railway.

Mr. Johnson: What is the use of connecting a light line with a heavy one?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to argue that there is at present any justification for putting in 60-pound rails, if that is what the hon. member is alluding to. There certainly is no justification for that in the traffic we have reason to expect, and it would be extremely injudicious to do it. As I have said, the length of this line is 120 miles. The resident occupiers at present within a 15-mile radius it is hard to estimate more than approximately, but they have been set down as 665.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Does that include Mr. Hedges?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will give notice of the question I shall endeavour to answer it.

Mr. Underwood: What is the extra length of line which has been necessitated to bring in Mr. Hedges' property?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: While these interjections may be fair enough so far as the gentleman referred to is concerned, I think they are certainly very unfair to me. I may point out that the route of this line has been selected on the advice of the advisory board, whose report is on the Table of the House. I do not think it is fair to imply that they have been actuated by any improper motive in making a recommendation to the House.

Mr. Collier: There is a bit of a strange twist in the route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no personal knowledge as to the whereabouts of Mr. Hedges' land.

Mr. Collier: It is down in that elbow in the route.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can assure hon. members that so far as the Government are concerned they are acting on the recommendation of their responsible officers. At present it is quite impossible for us to say where the line will actually go, nor can we say until

the permanent survey has been completed. As hon. members know, geographical difficulties very often lead to the deviation of a line to the extent of some two or three miles.

Mr. Bolton: So do Ministerial holdings.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know of any such case, and I think the insinuation a very improper one. If the hon. member knows of a case where, in the interests of a Minister, there has been a deviation, he ought to make it public. If he does not know, if he is merely trying to throw mud, I may remind him that it is not a very courageous thing to do. I think it is a great pity hon. members cannot wait until they have some charge to make and then make it. The insinuations thrown across at this bench are very unfair and entirely uncalled for.

Mr. Underwood: There is a twist in that line, though; perhaps you will explain it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to attempt to explain anything of the sort, but I am prepared to ask that members who desire to make a charge should make it straight out. If they have not the pluck to make it they should not throw insinuations. As a matter of fact, the insinuation made by the hon. member is that this route is going to be altered.

Mr. Bolton: You will get it straight out without any insinuation.

Mr. Underwood: Of course, this is not the only twist we have seen.

Mr. George: There is generally a five-mile margin of deviation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In regard to this line it is 10 miles. If hon. members wish seriously to discuss the question of route they will have the fullest opportunity of doing so. As I have said, the resident occupiers within 15 miles of the line number approximately 655, but they are expected to be doubled very shortly, because a large amount of selection has recently taken place. The approximate area held by resident occupiers at the present time is 511,774 acres, and the area under cultivation 41,877 acres, while the area cleared amounts to 27,825

acres, and the area ring-barked to 194,195 acres. The officers of the Lands Department estimate that 12 months hence there should be 200,000 acres ready for the plough, and that at the close of the same period from 300,000 to 400,000 acres should have been ring-barked. The average yield per acre last season was from 12 to 16 bushels of wheat, and 24 bushels of oats. Of course, the larger proportion of the land has only been taken up during last year. There are only eight holdings of over 1,000 acres. The land available for selection within 15 miles of the line and not served by any other railway is 868,416 acres; the area under pastoral lease 52,000 acres; pastoral lands available 814,000 acres; area permanently reserved 8,612 acres, or a total area of 1,567,360 acres within the influence of the proposed line. The average rainfall runs from 10 to 12 inches at Merredin up to over 18 inches at Wickepin. In most of the area water is easily conserved, the land having good holding qualities. The principal timber consists of white gum, salmon, morrel, York, jam, and gimlet, while a fair proportion of the land is under sheoak, ti-tree, tamar, and mallee scrub. The cost of clearing is from 20s. to 30s. per acre for forest country and 8s. to 10s. per acre for scrub country. The soil is mostly dark red loam, tailing off to light sandy in places. The subdivisions already thrown open carried good Agricultural Bank advances, and have been well sought after by selectors. It is expected that at least two town sites will be created along the route, and they are estimated to bring in about £5,000 each, at least. A large proportion of the land under cultivation cannot be profitably worked pending the construction of this line. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. Johnson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson) in moving the second reading

said: In this Bill, as in a similar measure which passed the Assembly last year, the qualification of electors for the Upper House, as provided for in Section 15 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899, is reduced, in the case of a freehold qualification from £100 to £50 capital value, and in the case of a leasehold, household, or ratepayer's qualification, from £25 annual value to £15 annual value. The Bill is identical in the object which it seeks to achieve with the Bill to amend the Constitution which passed this Chamber last session but failed to secure the necessary majority in another place, and, therefore, did not become law. It is now being submitted by the Government in the hope that on leaving this Chamber it will have a successful passage in another place, and reach the haven of accomplished legislation without further buffeting. It had been the intention of the Government to submit amendments of the Constitution in other directions, more particularly by way of abolishing the provision providing that a member of the Legislature on accepting a Ministerial portfolio should seek re-election. Owing, however, to the length to which the session has already extended, a length largely due to the extraordinary powers of speech possessed by some members of the Chamber, it was deemed advisable, in order to prevent further delay and avoid the possible endangering, in another place, of the amount of reform we seek to achieve, to introduce the Bill in the briefest possible form, providing only for the reduction of the franchise to the extent I have already indicated, an extent to which the House gave its imprimatur last session. It is not necessary, therefore, for me to bring forward any arguments in favour of the reduction of the franchise. If such arguments are required they are required, not here but elsewhere. I content myself, therefore, with moving—

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

On motion by Mr. Scaddan, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—LEEDERVILLE AND COTTESLOE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES.**

## *Recommittal.*

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES Bill recommitted for the purpose of considering certain amendments.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR MINES moved—

*That the following be added to stand as Clause 3:—"The land described in the Third Schedule hereto is hereby annexed to and included within the Peppermint Grove Road District and the boundaries of the said district are hereby altered accordingly."*

After the Bill had passed the second reading and Committee stages, the member for Claremont had expressed a desire that certain alterations should be made in the schedule of the Bill. Portion of the railway passed through ground that was contained in the Peppermint Grove roads district, and through ground in the Cottesloe Beach roads district, and although satisfactory arrangements had been made with the Leederville municipality, and he understood that the Claremont and Cottesloe people were also satisfied, he was, at the request of the member for the district, proposing alterations by which the portions of the railway running through the Peppermint Grove roads district and the Cottesloe Beach roads district should be included in those respective districts.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES the following was added to stand as Clause 4:—"The land described in the Fourth Schedule hereto is hereby annexed to and included within the Cottesloe Beach road district and the boundaries of the said district are hereby altered accordingly."

Second Schedule:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES the Second Schedule was amended by inserting at the beginning the words "The western half of," and as amended was agreed to.

New Schedules:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES the following were added to stand as the Third and Fourth Schedules:—

"The Third Schedule.—The eastern half of all that portion of the eastern railway reserve extending northward from the production west of the south side of Johnston-street to the production south-westward of a south-westerly line passing along the centre of the Perth-Fremantle-road as the same is delineated and coloured green, hatched red, on the plan marked E.E.L. No. 11737, deposited in the office of the Engineer of Existing Lines (Government Railways)."

The Fourth Schedule.—The eastern half of all that portion of the eastern railway reserve extending northward from the production east of the south boundary of Cottesloe Lot 154 to the production west of the south side of Johnston-street, as the same is delineated and coloured green, hatched red, on the plan marked E.E.L. No. 11737, deposited in the office of the Engineer of Existing Lines (Government Railways)."

Title:

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES the Title was amended by adding the words "and the Peppermint Grove and Cottesloe Beach Roads Districts," and as amended was agreed to.

Bill again reported with amendments.

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

## *Second Reading.*

Mr. MONGER (York) in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill which has come from another place where it has been properly considered from every standpoint, and where it was passed without amendment after a select committee had fully inquired into its merits and demerits. It is a measure by which the trustees of the mechanics' institute at York ask to be relieved of their responsibility which they desire shall be transferred to the York municipality. The trustees were unanimous, and the representatives of the ratepayers of York were likewise

unanimous in accepting the responsibility. I ask members to agree without unnecessary comment to the measure. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

On motion by Mr. Scaddan, debate adjourned.

## BILL—REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from previous day.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle) : Having made considerable progress to-day we have arrived at what I suppose is the principal item on the programme. At the outset I would like to just offer a few remarks in regard to the observations of the member for West Perth who last addressed himself to this Bill. That hon. member started off somewhat dramatically by saying that he could hardly understand why any heat had been introduced into this debate, when it was generally recognised that a redistribution of seats was necessary; and because it was only the second reading of the Bill which was being moved and only the principle of redistribution was to be discussed, he thought we could swallow the bait and agree at once to the second reading, whether the Bill was a good one or a bad one. It is during the second reading that a measure is generally discussed and criticised, and I cannot see the logic in the argument that because one is in favour of a general redistribution of seats, as I believe the majority of members are, he should agree to any Redistribution of Seats Bill that may be introduced into the Chamber for the consideration of members. At the outset the hon. gentleman quoted statements from members on this side of the Chamber in which the Government were seriously taken to task and in which the Bill was described as downright pure gerrymandering, and he used a most peculiar argument, because he tried to make out that if the Government had made a seat of a member of the Opposition more secure as well as making the seat of the leader of the Government

secure, there was no gerrymandering. He asked how could there be gerrymandering in the Bill if it gives one seat to an opponent as well as a seat to the Government. That argument only proves to my mind that it is gerrymandering. Surely that is not the principle to be followed in a Redistribution of Seats Bill; surely it is not right for any Government to so arrange boundaries of electorates as to be able to make the seat of one of their members secure, and to say that so long as they make the seat of an Opposition member secure also there is no ground for complaint. I cannot understand the member for West Perth taking that as his chief argument. It is practically all he put before us, though he also used an argument against representation on a population basis. "How was it possible," he said, "to go from cold Albany to the hot North at Wyndham and talk about a population basis"? He forgot, or, perhaps, he was not aware, that the hon. gentleman who introduced the measure and somewhat lucidly explained its details to the House, in discussing a Redistribution of Seats Bill some years ago, went bald-headed for representation on a population basis. The member for West Perth made only one objection to representation on a population basis, namely, because of the disabilities of the North-West. When he had finished that line of argument he said that, supposing we left the North out entirely, there would be some argument for representation on a population basis. The hon. member claimed that the figures of the Attorney General had not yet been disputed, but had been accepted. He said that all the criticism so far offered was by grouping electorates or adding figures to suit one's own argument without attempting to refute the figures of the Attorney General. I wish to be the first to dispute the figures of the Attorney General, if no one else has done so up till now; although I think it has been generally admitted, even by the Minister, that a great many of his figures are only approximate. They cannot be estimated down to a fine point, and they cannot be true figures as collected by the Electoral Department. I

want to show that to suit the arguments of the Attorney General, and to suit the supporters of the Ministry who are in favour of this Bill at any price, 135,924 is given as the electoral population of the State, though in the *Statistical Abstract*, which is issued by the Attorney General's Department, it will be found that the Chief Electoral Officer returns the electoral population of the State as 131,943.

The Attorney General: What figures are you referring to as coming from the Electoral Department?

Mr. BOLTON: I am referring to the latest return, that of September.

The Attorney General: There was one lot of figures at the end of June.

Mr. BOLTON: Peculiarly enough three months before the introduction of the Bill the electoral population, as shown in the *Statistical Abstract*, was 131,943 as returned by the Electoral Department.

The Attorney General: In September, yes, but the Bill was prepared prior to that.

Mr. BOLTON: Surely it will not be contended that it was not possible for the Minister to use the latest figures though they were telling against him. Surely it was possible for him to use the September figures, that show a reduction of 4,000 on the June figures, in order to prepare the measure. Will he contend that the measure was in preparation, or that the principle or basis of the Bill was outlined before September sufficiently so for the Minister to group the electorates as he has done here? I do not think so. I think the total of 135,924 voters is largely made up of assumptions on the part of the Minister. Of course, when I say Minister I allude to the department over which he has control, because, naturally, details can only be obtained from the Electoral Department. I do not intend my remark to be in any way personal. I speak of the department of which the Minister who introduced the Bill is head, but for which he is necessarily responsible to the House. To prove my argument, if it be necessary, it is suggested that the Irwin electorate be divided into two, and it is estimated that the one-half will contain 1,400 voters and the other half 1,500,

or something to that effect; but as no canvass or census of that electorate has been made it must follow that the figures are only assumption. I merely instance this one electorate to try to prove that the estimated electoral population of the State cannot be relied upon, and that there can be no truer figures than those issued by the Electoral Department on the 30th September. It is necessary under the Electoral Act to issue supplementary rolls. I admit there are a good many places in the State that have not within the last 12 months been canvassed by the Electoral Department to enrol those not already enrolled and to remove from the rolls those removed to other districts, and I admit there must necessarily be some changes, as I will prove before concluding my remarks, still, I think, it would have been much fairer to have taken the absolute return of the department itself first of all. It will be found in the *Statistical Abstract* for October that the total electoral population on the 30th September was 131,943. This total is very different to the total quoted by the Attorney General. If it is fair to use as an argument in favour of redistribution of seats that the increased population coming to the State within the last 12 months has made it necessary, also the greater number of people going on the land, a very large proportion of them coming from outside the limits of the State, it seems to me a most peculiar thing that there should be such a falling off from the 30th June, which the Minister quotes as being the date on which his figures were compiled, to the 30th September of the same year, a matter of only three months, a falling off amounting to 4,000 voters on the electoral roll. Will it be contended that the rolls were in any way inflated? I do not think so; because a careful scrutiny of the figures supplied by the Attorney General as being the electoral population in June, and a comparison with the figures in the return issued by the Electoral Department on the 30th September, will show that a good many of the districts that are under this Bill to obtain greater representation are the very districts that have fallen off in population. Had the Attorney General quoted

the latest figures supplied by his department there would have been much less justification for increasing representation in those districts where he desires to give it, and less than ever would there have been justification for reducing the number of members in certain districts he desires to reduce under this Bill.

The Attorney General: What are the districts you specifically refer to?

Mr. BOLTON: I have picked out 11 agricultural seats, according to the Minister's pamphlet. I do not in all particulars agree with the grouping on that pamphlet. I think the Minister will admit there is some room for argument in that regard. However, I have picked out 11 agricultural seats, and I will give the electoral population of those 11 seats on the 31st March of last year, the 30th June and the 30th September. I have taken Irwin, Greenough, Geraldton, Beverley, Katanning, Murray, Sussex, Swan, Williams, York, and Wellington. I have not taken them out as being the least in number by any means.

The Attorney General: In two cases we have had a trial census to get at the absolute figures.

Mr. BOLTON: In these 11 seats on the 30th March there were 23,718 voters according to the *Statistical Abstract*. Three months afterwards the voters in these electorates numbered 23,920, an increase of 200 in the three months. Then on the 30th September the *Statistical Abstract* showed the total electoral population of these 11 electorates as 23,485. The quota for these 11 seats is 2,132 voters, which I think it will not be disputed is not too high, taking the 11 seats as a whole. The decrease for six months is 233 in the 11 electorates, largely in the districts which the Bill provides shall have at least three or four additional members. If I have not made myself quite clear on that, I shall be able to do so with some further figures. It is provided that out of the Irwin, Greenough and Geraldton electorates shall come another to be known as the Moore electorate.

The Attorney General: Do these electorates show a decrease?

Mr. BOLTON: Yes. On the 31st March Irwin had 2,091 voters, on the 30th September the *Statistical Abstract* showed the voters as 1,893, a considerable decrease. The Irwin electorate is divided into two practically to make a new electorate, and the Attorney General's figures show that the new electorate of Moore is to have an electoral strength of 1,400, allowing for the 1,400 for the Irwin.

The Attorney General: In the new Moore district a small portion of Toodyay is included.

Mr. BOLTON: I admit it, but the number taken in in addition to the present Irwin before it is divided is so small that it hardly makes up for the loss the electorate suffered in the last six months when this very agricultural district on the Midland line that wants more representation was reduced by nearly 200.

The Attorney General: Was there a decrease in Greenough and Geraldton?

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

Mr. BOLTON: I was pointing out that the electorate of Irwin in the Bill is to become two electorates practically by a division, with a small addition from the Toodyay district, and having finished with those figures, the Attorney General by interjection asked me how Greenough had fared. I then was about to point out that the Greenough electorate compared very favourably in numbers, because in replying to a question asked from this side of the House as to how many electorates had been canvassed by the Electoral Department since November, 1909, the answer given was that the number was five, and among the five were Greenough and Geraldton. It necessarily follows that there are a number who on coming of age, are entitled to enrolment, but there are also people who have crossed the boundary of an electorate and settled in such districts as Greenough and Geraldton would be. The result of the canvass brought up the Greenough electorate very considerably, and it only goes to show if the same method had been adopted with regard to some centres



where it is desired to lessen the representation, there is no doubt that the numbers would have been increased just as was done in the Greenough electorate. In one centre of the State where this Bill provides for less representation, no attempt was made to obtain figures. The recorded number of the electoral population of North Fremantle is 1,724, and yet I guarantee that the electoral population of that district to-day is 2,500. It will be admitted there is a considerable disparity between these figures. Moreover I go further and say that the head of the Electoral Department himself is fully aware, as I believe the Minister also is, of the largely increased population of that particular electorate during the past six months.

The Attorney General: We revised it once, and we gave you credit for an increase.

Mr. BOLTON: The revision took place a long time ago. When the Attorney General replied that five electorates had been canvassed, North Fremantle was not numbered among that five. The argument that the Attorney General would have used after that canvass, would have been that the quota for the four Fremantles was 200 per electorate above the quota of the State according to his own figures. If you take away 600 from a place which is grouped into four electorates for the purposes of comparison, it follows that the figures of each would be 150 and the position would be made to look worse. If a test were made in three different districts in order to see the difference, why was not a test made in the particular locality where it was desired to lessen the representation? The test was not made because it was common knowledge to every member of the Ministry, and to the head of the Electoral Department that the works which were going on in that electorate had led to an increase in the population. I might mention that in 1904 when I was returned to this Chamber, the roll contained the names of 3,200 electors. During the time of the slump, and unfortunately North Fremantle suffered more than any other place, that number was

gradually reduced to 1,500. There are no fewer houses in North Fremantle this year than there were in 1904, and to-day every house in that locality is occupied, and a great many of the shops which were built by Dr. Kenny a few years ago, are occupied to-day as dwelling houses. It is a natural deduction to make that the population is at least what it was in 1904. Moreover, when the Electoral Department are aware of that fact it would have been at least a fair thing to have had a test as to the accuracy of the roll. If that test had been carried out it would have been found that there were 700 or 800 electors in the South Fremantle electorate also who were not enrolled. The four Fremantles are not credited with the correct number of the electoral population, and it would have been more fair if the test had been made there. I will now reply to the Attorney General with regard to the figures for Greenough. On the 31st March the number of electors there was 1,440 and on the 30th September the number had increased to 1,593, which was the result of the canvass made by the Electoral Department. Geraldton on the 31st March had 1,674, and as a result of that same electoral canvass the figures increased to 1,796, and now as an additional argument in reply to my first statement that there was a discrepancy of 4,000 in the figures of the Attorney General and those as published by the department, the Geraldton figures as given in this particular return by the department are 1,796, while in the return supplied to this House by the Attorney General they are given as 2,000.

The Attorney General: There have been names taken from Greenough and put on to Geraldton in order to increase the Geraldton quota to 2,000.

Mr. BOLTON: The peculiarity is that when you take a portion of one electorate and put it on to another, you add to that other electorate, but the numbers of the former electorate are not lessened in any way. What I cannot understand is how it is that Greenough and Irwin get their numbers, and Toodyay also, and Irwin which is to make two electorates

with the addition of a small portion of the Toodyay electorate, loses nothing. I could go on with the 11 electorates that I enumerated without giving the increases and decreases, and I could show that in the Wellington electorate on the 31st March there were 1,760 electors enrolled, and that on the 30th September the number was 1,711. The member for West Perth in his speech pointed to the fact that there was no gerrymandering in this Bill because the Government agreed to wipe out the Wellington electorate which was held by a Ministerialist. The hon. member asked why the Government agreed to wipe out Wellington. If I am not able to give him the answer to that I would refer him to what was said by Mr. Driver who was chairman of a protest meeting held in the electorate of Wellington. Before a motion adverse to this Bill was passed at that meeting, Mr. Driver implored the meeting—

Mr. Jacoby: How many were present?

Mr. BOLTON: I will give the hon. member some figures directly. Mr. Driver presided over that meeting held in protest against this Bill, and he implored it not to carry an adverse motion because he said that the Government scheme was that if they did not wipe out Wellington and divide it between Sussex and Bunbury there was nothing surer than that the Labour party would win Bunbury and Sussex at the next election. He said that information came from Sir Newton Moore, the ex-Premier of the State. If Sir Newton Moore gave this information to the gentleman who presided at that protest meeting that it was absolutely necessary to wipe out Wellington to save Bunbury and Sussex, I would remind the member for West Perth that it was no argument that there was no gerrymandering. If Wellington is to be divided between Bunbury and Sussex to save those places, that is the only reason that the Government can have for cutting out Wellington.

The Minister for Lands: Sir Newton Moore did not say that.

Mr. BOLTON: Mr. Driver made the statement to the meeting that Sir Newton

Moore had informed him of that fact and it was for those two gentlemen to settle the matter between them. Moreover it had been published in the Press. The 11 electorates I previously quoted have an enrolment of 23,485. They are agricultural electorates. The quota for those would be 2,132 which is roughly a fair number. Under the redistribution there are to be added three seats to the 11, and the quota is to be 1,692 per electorate. I cannot see because there is a decrease for six months of 233 voters over an area covered by these 11 electorates, an actual decrease of electors, that the addition of three electorates for the purpose of reducing the quota can be termed anything else but gerrymandering. I might also point to another method of grouping. The member for West Perth said that the only criticism had been with regard to grouping electorates for the purpose of the arguments of the particular speaker which I suppose he will admit is fair argument and fair criticism; because it cannot be expected that every member of the Chamber will accept the grouping of the Attorney General. I have grouped four electorates adjoining on the goldfields, namely Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Hannans and Brown Hill. Those four electorates aggregate 17,000 electors with a quota of 4,250. I have also grouped, as against them, four adjoining electorates with different interests, namely, Geraldton, Greenough, Irwin and Moore. The aggregate of these four electorates is 6,400 as against the 17,000 for the same number of seats on the goldfields, and with a quota of 1,600 as against 4,250. They are four adjoining electorates, like the goldfields electorates referred to. Each of the four agricultural electorates is served by a daily train service, just as are the goldfields electorates, perhaps even better.

Mr. Scaddan: Certainly a more frequent service.

Mr. BOLTON: I cannot understand why there should be such a disparity, unless it can be stated that the agricultural interests do not receive the consideration they deserve at the hands of members of either or both parties. I think

it will be admitted that the agricultural interests have been well looked after by both sides, and therefore there is no justification for such a disparity as the figures disclose. Now I have also grouped other seats. I have grouped what is to be, if this Bill becomes law—which I hope it will not in its present form—I have grouped the three Fremantle seats, and I have also grouped the three outport seats. Fremantle is essentially a port, and the three I have grouped as against the three Fremantles are also essentially ports, namely, Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton. The three Fremantle seats—and I have to take the Attorney General's figures in this regard without allowing for the big discrepancy shown in the North and South Fremantle electorates—the total for the three Fremantle seats is 11,500, giving a quota of 3,833. The aggregate for the three outport seats is 6,800, with a quota of 2,266. Here we have 11,500 as against 6,800, and a quota of 3,833 as against 2,266. Now they are all ports, they are all within reach of the capital city, with only a day's travel at most. Bunbury, especially, has what I might almost term as good a service as Fremantle with the capital. The community of interests is exactly the same; the three Fremantles constitute simply a port, Bunbury is simply a port, and so too are Geraldton and Albany. Yet the quota of the outport seats is little more than half that of the Fremantles. Now I have also taken what at present are three contiguous agricultural seats, namely, Beverley, Narrogin, and Katanning. Narrogin, of course, should be called Williams. The aggregate for the three is 9,352, giving a quota of 3,117. Now those three seats have been made five electorates, without taking any additional area at all, and they are to be called Beverley, Pingelly, Narrogin, Wagin, and Katanning. These five seats, according to the Attorney General's figures, will have 9,600 electors. As I have pointed out, the figures are greater than they are in the abstract in one or two instances. Three seats having been made into five seats the figures must be partly assumption, and it will be found on the list supplied by the

Attorney General there are one or two, or even more of the seats given as having a quota of 1,900. It is little short of marvellous that we can take three electorates on the Great-Southern, make them into five seats, and put three or four of them at a quota of 1,900. But I do not complain of a big discrepancy in this, as there is only a difference of some 250 votes in the five electorates. But no additional area has been brought in.

The Attorney General: I think a little of Nelson has been added.

Mr. BOLTON: I thought that at one time, but I think if it is looked at closely it will be found that Nelson cannot go on to any seat except Katanning. It certainly cannot go to Beverley, because Beverley is farthest removed from Nelson. I cannot for the life of me understand it. If there is a quota of 3,117 for the three seats, and one additional seat is given to that particular district, not much complaint could be made; but when two additional seats are given to the district and the quota is set down at 1,920 for districts such as Beverley, Pingelly, Narrogin, Wagin and Katanning—the farthest of which is Katanning, while Beverley is only 100 miles removed from the capital—it is, if not gerrymandering, at least distinctly unfair. I say again there can be no justification unless it can be shown that the agricultural interests have not been looked after as they should have been by members of the Chamber. I have also grouped three pastoral seats as against three outlying goldfields. I have done so because they are far removed from the capital. We will see how this works out. Gascoyne, Kimberley and Roebourne have an aggregate of 3,700 electors, while the three goldfields seats, namely Cue, Mt. Magnet, and Murchison, aggregate 6,725. The quota for the pastoral seats is 1,233 and for the goldfields seats 2,241. Let me here say that I believe it would be next to impossible, or at least distinctly unfair, to ask our North-West to have the same quota as, perhaps, obtains in the metropolitan district. It would be awkward to get over. Still with all that if the North-West is left alone with a quota

of 1,233, whatever justification there may be for that, there is still no justification for an increase of two seats in the Beverley-Katanning district, when it is effected at the expense of the port with a quota in each individual electorate of more than the aggregate of the three pastoral seats, I say there is no justification for giving the Great Southern district two extra seats at the expense of the chief port. If the people down there must have additional representation, if the population justifies it, far better would it be for the Government to say the additional representation shall be given, but not at the expense of any other particular district; more especially when the districts which are to be robbed of their representation have increased in population far more than the districts which are gaining the additional representation. I say it is unfair from that standpoint, and I should at least think better of the hon. members who represent that district if they admitted that the agricultural interests have been well looked after, and that it is not altogether a fair thing to rob one group with a quota higher than their own in order to provide two additional seats where one would, perhaps, have been a fair thing.

Mr. Piesse: There has been an increase in the number of electors in each of the districts you quoted.

Mr. BOLTON: I will be able to give you the increases and the decreases in those particular districts presently. In the list as supplied by the Attorney General the Minister has formed a group and headed it "Metropolitan and Fremantle, Urban and Residential Suburban Districts." I take as the classification of these districts the one termed "metropolitan"; that is to say, from Fremantle to Guildford inclusive, which I think is a fair way of grouping, and which is practically what the Minister has done. The aggregate for the twelve electorates here comprised is 47,693, the quota being 3,974; yet in the face of that the Government propose to take one seat away, although these twelve seats now have a quota of 3,974. To take away one seat from that district and give it to a district that has not increased in electoral popula-

tion so much as this one particular district when it is grouped—is that fair to the metropolitan area, to the Perth district that has increased more than any other district during the past five years, and during the past six months? It is generally conveniently forgotten that any part of the immigration which comes to this country stays in the city, or near it; it is conveniently forgotten that any of them ever stay in the city. Every man or woman of them is supposed to go to the agricultural districts, and more particularly to those which are to receive increased representation. Yet, as I have shown, one district which is to be divided into two and to have two members has lost 200 electors in the past six months, and it is hardly possible for that electorate, namely Irwin, to gain many more in the same number of years, because there is not the land available in the district for that settlement which would allow them to bring themselves anywhere near the quota of the metropolitan seats to-day.

The Attorney General: Under the proposed redistribution a large number will be added.

Mr. BOLTON: But this shows just the opposite. I have collected the figures for the Irwin electorate from the past three supplementary rolls. I give the figures for March, June, and September, and I say the numbers have decreased for the nine months.

Mr. S. F. Moore: What about the additions to the Irwin electorate?

Mr. BOLTON: Had the member for Irwin been in his seat he would have heard the Attorney General giving me the information that a very small portion indeed of Toodyay and of Swan had been added to Irwin, and Irwin had been divided into two and given two members. And after all this gerrymandering and figure faking we find the Attorney General admitting there will be only 1,500 electors in the new electorate. Where is this great area of Swan and Toodyay which will produce 1,500 electors, according to the Minister's own statement? The member for the district should know that at least there would be very many to be taken into the Irwin electorate when the two

electorates, of Irwin and Moore combined, did not amount to 3,000 electors, with the additions under the redistribution of seats. That ought to be sufficient answer to the member for Irwin. Here are the figures supplied by the Minister, whom the member for Irwin so blindly follows, and there are not 3,000 voters in the two electorates.

Mr. S. F. Moore: What about all the new settlement going on?

Mr. BOLTON: The hon. member has had the whole place canvassed in an endeavour to bring up the quota to a reasonable standard, and yet we find that there are to be 1,400 electors in the old electorate and 1,500 in the new. I was quoting the 12 metropolitan seats, with a quota of 3,974, from which they propose to take one seat. As against that I have 16 electorates under the Attorney General's heading of agricultural and urban, all of them within daily railway communication with the capital. I will name the seats so as the Attorney General will see that I am doing things aboveboard, especially as I am the first to dispute the Minister's figures.

The Attorney General: It is quite a pleasant change.

Mr. BOLTON: It might be a pleasant change, but when I produced these figures as against those of the Attorney General it was unpleasant for the moment, at any rate. The electorates I refer to are Nelson, Sussex, Swan, Moore, Irwin, Greenough, Toodyay, Aron, York, Beverley, Pingelly, Narrogin, Wagin, Katanning, and Northam.

Mr. S. F. Moore: Oh, sell the lot.

Mr. BOLTON: I will add the hon. member to them and sell them for nothing. But the figures of those electorates are useful to me for argument, and the hon. member is not even useful for that. The aggregate for these electorates is 30,600, giving a quota of 1,912. If those 16 electorates, all within a day's railway travelling of the capital, are to have 30,600 electors and 12 metropolitan seats 47,693, and then to be reduced by one member—if that is to be done, and it may not be called gerrymandering and figure faking, it is at least decidedly unfair to the chief port of the State.

Mr. Gill: Where do you get the 47,000 from, it was 51,000 before?

Mr. BOLTON: As I have already pointed out, the Attorney General's figures were not correct by 4,000. Again, I have grouped four agricultural seats and four goldfields seats. The agricultural seats are Nelson, Sussex, Murray, and Swan, and the aggregate is 7,800 and the quota 1,950, as against four goldfields seats, namely, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Hannans, and Brown Hill, with an aggregate of 17,000 and a quota of 4,250. Those four agricultural seats are less than half the distance from the capital than the goldfields seats are, they are served by the railway, and have no right to the discrepancy which the figures show.

Mr. Collier: They do not vote labour; that is the difficulty.

Mr. BOLTON: That is the difficulty. But surely if one can show that there is an injustice in this Bill, no matter what the supporters of the Government may do, the Minister in charge of the Bill will listen to reason and have those anomalies corrected. The facts I have mentioned cannot be got away from; if a group of electorates are decreasing in electoral population and another group of electorates has increased in electoral population, surely we cannot increase the representation of decreased electorates and decrease the representation of the electorates which have increased.

The Attorney General: There must be a difference between scattered and compact electorates.

Mr. BOLTON: I will concede that. Having grouped 11 agricultural seats and shown a decrease of 233 in six months, I now propose showing the increases during the same period in other portions of the State which the Minister in charge of the Bill conveniently overlooked. Fremantle, North Fremantle, East Fremantle, and South Fremantle increased by 1,180 during the past six months according to the abstract issued by the Electoral Department, and that does not include the very large increase in population that has taken place in all those centres since the big works were started there within the last six months. I think that will be admitted

by all the representatives of Fremantle and by the Minister. Balkatta, Canning, Claremont, Guildford, and Subiaco increased by 1,996. These are all included in the metropolitan seats. The decreases I want to show are Coolgardie, Dundas, Kanowna, Menzies, Leonora, Mt. Margaret, and Yilgarn, the outlying gold-fields, which have decreased in six months by 716 in the aggregate for the seven electorates, and yet while I have shown that the agricultural electorates have decreased by 233 and the decrease in the seven gold-fields electorates was only 716, the gold-fields are to suffer a reduction of two seats, and the agricultural electorates, despite their decrease in the same period, are to gain four seats. It is a marvellous computation. If there has been an increase in one district and a decrease in another, and greater representation is to be given to the district which shows the increase, why does it not apply to all cases? I do not suppose it will be claimed by the Minister for Lands that there had been anything like a forward movement in land settlement prior to five years ago, although, doubtless, he would like to show that the increase took place during the years he has been in the Lands Office. I want to be once more particularly fair, and I will show on the return printed by the Chief Electoral Officer the enrolment for 1905 and 1910. I do that because that is the term the Attorney General took to show the increase in certain agricultural electorates. Balkatta, Canning, Claremont, Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, South Fremantle, Guildford, Perth, East Perth, North Perth, West Perth, and Subiaco, the 13 seats I had previously grouped under the heading of metropolitan seats, had a total enrolment in 1905 of 39,395. The enrolment for 1910 is 48,402, an increase for the five years in the metropolitan centre of 9,007 voters, notwithstanding the fact that during that time a great slaughter was made in several of the Fremantle electorates, where the rolls were said to have been inflated. I now come to the 12 agricultural seats named by the Minister himself and I will show the increase for the five years, which is apparently the only justification

he gives for increasing the representation in those particular districts. The districts are Nelson, Sussex, Wellington, Murray, Swan, Irwin, Greenough, Toodyay, York, Beverley, Williams, and Katanning. In 1905 the total electoral population of those districts was 17,356, whilst the total electoral population in 1910 was 25,920. The increase of population for the five years in the agricultural centres that are to have four additional representatives is 8,534, as against upwards of 9,000 in the metropolitan area, which is to lose one member. Now, what are we to call this sort of thing if we cannot call it gerrymandering or figure-faking? Will anyone claim that it is a fair deal for the metropolitan area? These are not my own figures but are the figures supplied by Mr. Stenberg, and can be proved by the *Statistical Abstracts* issued each month containing the number of electors on the rolls. If the argument as to the growth of the agricultural industry and the increase of settlement and population in those districts demands more representation, does it demand that the metropolitan district, having gained more than the agricultural districts, shall at least lose one member? The very least that could have been expected was that the metropolitan area would have been left alone, but I go further than that and say that the metropolitan area, Perth especially, is entitled to more representation on the gain it has had during the last five years. The 12 seats I have named, which embrace the whole of the agricultural area according to the Minister's return, show a total gain for five years of 8,500 as against 9,000 in the metropolitan area; and if 8,500 additional electors require four new representatives, surely the metropolitan area is entitled to two additional representatives, even on the 4,000 quota allotted by the Minister as against the 2,000 quota for the agricultural districts. But have I to appeal to members to ask them if they think that is fair to the metropolitan area?

Mr. Scaddan: They are all caucus-ridden.

Mr. BOLTON: That is not my province now. I am putting forward what is a fair

proposition, and I trust that the Minister is prepared to listen to what is fair and reasonable in the Bill. If my figures cannot be proved to the hilt, no word of mine need be taken in good faith in the future.

The Attorney General: We are pleased to listen to your arguments.

Mr. BOLTON: I hope the hon. member is prepared to do more than that. If he is still prepared to do this injustice the time will come when it will be rectified beyond this Chamber. It is due to the metropolitan district to protest against this unfair treatment and to demand an amendment so that their representation will not be as it is proposed in the Bill. There would not be so much complaint if the representation for the metropolitan area was retained as it is at present, but as it is proposed, how can the Minister expect the people to be satisfied? The Minister must know that a proportionate increase will go on in the metropolitan area almost equal to the increase in the agricultural areas; but supposing it only goes on at half the rate it does in the agricultural districts, the population must increase at the port, because every additional thousand acres put under crop means that the output must be handled *en route* and at the port. Every bit of settlement that goes on in the interior of the country must have its numerous attendants. Even the bootmaker does not live in the agricultural centres, though the boot-repairer may do so. Everything must increase proportionately and must increase in the cities, centralising population, as well as in the agricultural districts. No fear need be entertained by the Minister that the population will lessen in these districts, so there is no justification for decreasing the representation in a district where an increase has been. I do not deny that the agricultural districts may be entitled to further representation; but if they are to be entitled to further representation because of their increase in population, that additional representation should not be at the expense of a district that has also increased even more so than the agricultural districts. If the agricultural dis-

tricts must have a low quota and more representation, I do not believe the people would be averse to giving increased representation, even if it meant an increase in the number of members of the House. If it is thought that in this vast State we must have more money spent for police protection because of our vast area, so also should there be justification for an increase in the number of members of Parliament because of the vastness of our territory. So I say that if increased representation is necessary it should be done by increasing the number of members rather than by benefiting one place at the expense of another. Under another heading in the redistribution proposals of the Minister I find that the outports and country towns have 9,600 voters, the pastoral districts 3,700, the agricultural 7,800, the Midland 4,400, and the Great Southern 15,600, a total of 41,100, as against 51,000 for metropolitan and Fremantle, urban and residential, and suburban districts. These are the figures I have already quoted with the addition of Canning. I did not consider that Canning was a metropolitan seat, but I have included it in these figures which show a difference between my previous figures and the ones I now quote, and bring the total up to 51,000 for metropolitan and Fremantle, urban and residential, and suburban. In addition there are mining and timber 43,875, the aggregate under this heading being 94,875 against the 41,100 for the country seats. For these 41,100 votes there are 22 electorates returning 22 members, and the quota is 1,868. For the 94,875, on the other hand, there are 28 electorates returning 28 members and the quota is 3,388. In other words the 94,875 voters as against the 41,100 have only the advantage of six members. I admit there may be some argument for having a different quota for big scattered and outlying districts—I do not argue against that—but I say the discrepancy is too great; and where these districts have increased and must have more representation, I say let it be at the expense of those districts that have gone down, but not at the expense of those districts which show increases and

are entitled to more representation. I have also tabulated a column of the whole of the Ministerial seats. In order that members may not forget who are the Ministerial supporters, I had better read these electorates out, they are—Beverley, Bunbury, Canning, Claremont, Fremantle, South Fremantle, Gascoyne, Geraldton, Greenough, Irwin, Katanning, Kimberley, Menzies, Murray, Nelson, Northam, Perth, East Perth, West Perth, Roebourne, Subiaco, Sussex, Swan, Tooday, Wellington, Williams, and York. I want to show the difference in the number of enrolled electors during the last six months in these particular seats as I have done in all the other figures I have quoted. On the 31st March of last year the total enrolments were 68,218 in the whole of the seats of the Ministerial followers; on the 30th June the figures were 70,702 and on the 30th September the enrolments were 68,869. I previously made the statement that the Attorney General used the June figures instead of the September figures issued by his department and available to every member through the *Statistical Abstract* because they suited him better. The discrepancy of even 2,000 between June and September is all in favour of the Attorney General rather than against him, and will give at least one reason why the figures of the Attorney General do not tally with the figures in the return issued by the Electoral Department. I want to be particularly fair in this comparison. I am not going to deal with the decrease in the last three months, because in all my other figures I have shown merely the increase or decrease for the six months. In this case the increase for the six months for the whole of the Ministerial seats was 651 voters, the gain per seat being 24 votes, the quota for the seats being 2,250. I will now give the Opposition members and afterwards make my explanation as to the two columns. It is only necessary to say that the seats I have not mentioned are necessarily seats occupied by members of the Opposition. On the 31st March the enrolments for electorates represented by the Opposition were 60,218; on the 30th June the figures were 60,481, and on the 30th September—to show I am par-

ticularly fair—the enrolments were 58,895 in the whole of the Opposition seats, or a decrease for the six months of 1,323. The Opposition are losing three seats for a decrease of 1,323 voters, and the Ministerial supporters are gaining three seats. At any rate, three seats are being taken from the Opposition—there is no question about that—by the amalgamation in every case of two Labour seats into one because of a decrease of 1,323 votes, while the Ministerialists are gaining three seats for an increase of 651. I cannot understand where the fairness of this Bill comes in when figures such as these are put forward. The principal feature we are told is community of interest, and again we are told that it is because of the increased population. I think I have said all I can as to the unfairness of increased population not getting the representation in one district where it gets it in another; and having dealt lengthily with that, I can afford to leave it as being a fair, square and just criticism with figures that can be proved and at least are worthy of some consideration by the Ministry. Community of interest is certainly a little more alarming, but cannot take long. There cannot be many figures on community of interest. Members are indebted to the Chief Electoral Officer for the splendid return he made to the House and which has been published in the Press, containing a wonderful amount of information for members and the general public on the question of electoral reform and methods of elections. These matters were never understood so well as they are now because of this return, and we are indebted to Mr. Stenberg for it. Community of interest does not at all appeal to me. I will give just one instance. Murray electorate was, and probably is, an agricultural electorate; but for a certain purpose a part of the Murray electorate is tacked on to a sea-port electorate, that of South Fremantle. If there can be any community of interest between the Peel estate, which is a pastoral area, and the chief port, I do not quite understand it. If it is made a community of interest by tacking on to South Fremantle a big area of the Murray electorate to allow the Murray to go



further south, it is certainly peculiar to add a farming or pastoral area to an electorate which had already an enrolment of 3,718 in September. Certainly there is nothing but cattle on the estate, and the alteration means that the quota for South Fremantle is just about what it was; but if that is not nearly gerrymandering they have not far to go to make it gerrymandering. I know that in South Fremantle there are four or five hundred electors who want to be enrolled and who are living in the district. It is known that South Fremantle also had a severe slump about eight or nine months ago, and there was a great number of unoccupied houses, while to-day the place is fairly well occupied, and the houses are not empty. After the enrolment and when the figures were published by the Electoral Department, or after the census or a canvass had been taken, the houses became occupied, and it follows that there should be an increase in the electoral population.

The Attorney General: We have added 700 electors to South Fremantle since the 31st March.

Mr. BOLTON: The figures given in the *Statistical Abstract* for this year show that on the 30th March the numbers were 3,179, on the 30th June 3,868, and on the 30th September 3,718.

The Attorney General: We have given you the highest figures—3,868.

Mr. BOLTON: That is so; my figures are the same. South Fremantle has shown in the six months an increase of about 700, that is, taking the June figures. Those figures alone show the growth of the port, and point to the fact that the back country development will increase the population around the port, and again proves my argument that the districts of Fremantle were badly slumped up 12 months ago but are now more thickly populated than can be imagined even by the Minister. The electoral claims for South Fremantle are not the result of the work of the Electoral Department, they have come from the people who have gone to live in the district, and, perhaps, one party or another party, or their friends, have

gone around to see that the people were enrolled. Not more than 10 or 15 per cent. of the people of their own volition are placed on the electoral roll; it is the general experience that someone must look them up. I say, however, that the increase is much more than that. I could dispute some of the figures of the Minister. If the alteration of the boundaries to what is to be known as the North-East Fremantle electorate takes place, that is, if a portion of the East Fremantle electorate is cut off and put on to the Fremantle electorate, or a portion is added to the east end of the East Fremantle electorate known as Applecross, we are told that the quota for East Fremantle will be about 3,800. The number enrolled at East Fremantle to-day is six short of 3,000; we might say roughly 3,000.

The Attorney General: In June it was 2,950.

Mr. BOLTON: The portion that is cut off East Fremantle is well known to the present member for East Fremantle, who has a perfect insight into these things and knows almost every name and every house in the electorate, and he declares that it will remove 600 of his electors away up into Fremantle. This will leave 2,200. The Applecross district consists of roughly 100 voters, but they may be put down safely at 80, and I made the statement previously to-night, which I repeat now, that the North Fremantle electoral roll will show 2,500 electors who are to be added to East Fremantle, or it may be said that the East Fremantle names will be added to those of North Fremantle.

The Attorney General: What are the figures of North Fremantle?

Mr. BOLTON: The published figures are only 1,724, but there has been no canvass.

The Attorney General: We added about 200.

Mr. BOLTON: I added about 200 in a spare two days. The number of electors on the proposed North-East Fremantle roll will, therefore, be 4,780, and I guarantee, and this will be recorded,

that if the Bill becomes law on the boundaries proposed my words will be proved to the hilt, that there will be 4,780 votes in the North-East Fremantle electorate. I want to make it particularly clear, because the time will come when I may have to refer to the matter. I have never neglected my rolls, and neither has the member for East Fremantle, and I think hon. members may accept our statements with regard to the estimates of electors because of our knowledge of the electors who are resident within our districts.

The Attorney General: You are speaking of the proposed North-East Fremantle electorate.

Mr. BOLTON: Yes; and I would like to lay extra emphasis on "proposed." I wish it was not proposed. Let me say that if North Fremantle, when its houses were fully occupied and with its limited area, did not admit of further electors than we show on the roll tonight, my voice could never be raised in asking for separate representation there. I know what I am speaking of, and the head of the Electoral Department knows that what I am saying is true. The Government themselves are now arranging a scheme for workmen's settlement blocks in North Fremantle because there is no accommodation, now that the Mount Lyell works have started, and the soap manufacturers have quadrupled their works, and the Government are undertaking works on the North side of the river. All these things have provided work for so many people that it is found there are no places for them to live in, and, as I stated earlier in the evening, it has been found necessary to use as living houses a number of buildings which were intended to be shops. Only recently the Minister for Lands agreed to throw open 50 acres of land, which was until lately a university endowment, and cut up those 50 acres into quarter-acre blocks and let them as workmen's settlement blocks, because it was recognised that there was no living accommodation in the town. When the electoral roll had 3,300 names on it and

there were no empty houses there, there were a great number of men working in the quarry and who were living in the electorate. The position to-day is similar, and the workmen are so numerous that they cannot find any place in which to live. Is it not fair, therefore, for me to show that the population has increased to such an extent that the figures of the Attorney General must be upset and that he will then, perhaps, say that had he known that such was the case there would have been no justification for attempting to reduce the representation? That is the reason why I make the statement that there is in the proposed new electorate no fewer than 4,700 votes.

The Attorney General: Your estimate is that we are 1,000 votes out.

Mr. BOLTON: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: And there are a good many more places where you are 1,000 votes out.

Mr. BOLTON: I repeat that a mistake has been made in cutting off a portion of East Fremantle and attaching it to Fremantle when there are probably 500, or 400 perhaps less, in that particular area than the Electoral Department have estimated. The member for East Fremantle also will be able to give figures which will convince the House that the Electoral Department has made a mistake, and that hon. member knows his electorate thoroughly. I am going so far as to say that I do not believe the present method of election is altogether satisfactory. Whilst the leader of the Opposition in speaking made it particularly plain that he spoke only for himself with regard to proportional representation, I believe that proportional representation is the best method, but I believe that it is sometimes difficult where you are situated, as is the case in this State. Still, proportional representation is the best possible representation we could have. There is nothing biased in proportional representation. All parties must be represented; it is not a gain or a loss to either party to adopt such a method, but where you cannot get proportional representation would it not have been a fair com-

promise, or a sort of hybrid proposal and one which would have been accepted, if the Minister had adopted the Queensland method? That would give as "come and go," a quota of 1,080, a fifth of the electorate, whatever it may be; but if we divided our electorates into 50 the "come and go" would be 1,108. If that is so, surely it is a proposal which the Minister could have adopted in Western Australia as a beginning towards proportional representation. The member for West Perth did not agree with the member for Kalgoorlie as to the way in which the seats were grouped. In taking the provinces that gentleman took them as grouped electorates, because it is clear that each State electorate is grouped inside a particular province or that a province embraces so many particular State electorates. I say that the ground work was there at once for the hon. member to adopt. I say this, that whoever was appointed, or if anyone was appointed, and even if the Government themselves had taken it into their own hands and declared that it should have the highest or the lowest quota, even that would have been more satisfactory than the Bill. I contend, as I have contended all along, and I have taken part in public meetings and I shall do so again when the opportunity occurs, I have the right to point out where the injustices are. Had the Minister adopted that proposal and taken the matter into his own hands and declared it should have been the highest and the lowest quota, that would have been more satisfactory than the Bill which we have before us. I was going to refer, but I do not think it is necessary to do so, because I have spoken quite long enough, to the increased trade at the particular centres to which I have been alluding. My desire was to show that there has been an increased number of vessels, with a corresponding increased tonnage, calling at the port of Fremantle, and this must of necessity show there is a greater number of men to handle those particular commodities. But I think I can safely let that all go, and trust to my figures. I had a few

figures prepared in regard to North Fremantle to show the up and down nature of the progress of that electorate during the past few years. Thus, in 1904 there were in that electorate 3,266 electors; in 1905 there were 2,077 electors, and in 1908 there were 1,800, and the lowest number prior to the publication of the September return was 1,500.

The Attorney General: That was in March?

Mr. BOLTON: Yes, I think. In June it was 1,721. There was a great number not approved by September, but still I know they do not come into the Bill. It just shows that the big slump which emptied the houses there did the same thing at South Fremantle, and largely at East Fremantle; while to-day it is not possible to get accommodation in either of these electorates. It goes to show that if the figures of five years ago are quoted in regard to those electorates it will be found that the newcomers have once more suddenly filled those houses and that the immense amount of work going on there has given a new electoral strength equal to what it was five years ago, or an increase of 8,000 adults over those we had registered on our rolls in March or June last. It is serious to know we have a difference such as that, and that the department is not aware of it. If a census were taken of the Fremantles, and if the quota supplied by the Attorney General could not then be knocked out by hundreds, I would be prepared to stand or fall by it; and I know the number will be further increased very much indeed, and that it will be found there is no justification whatever for the proposed reduction.

The Attorney General: What are your figures for Fremantle?

Mr. BOLTON: For the four Fremantles? What is it in the list?

The Attorney General: It was 11,000 on the 30th June.

Mr. BOLTON: However, I do not propose to take up any further time. I hope I have not unnecessarily wearied the House. I have applied myself as well as I could to what has been fair and genuine argument. I think that is the best thing, at the present time at all

events; and if it can be shown there is an injustice, I hope the Minister will be prepared to listen to reason, and will take some notice of an amendment, and will at least allow the existing representation to continue. I sincerely hope he will be reasonable and will not put his back up as he sometimes does. I admit that a rearrangement of boundaries is necessary, but I believe that whether unconsciously or not the Minister has the wrong end of the stick in certain regards, and in certain electorates. It is his duty to find out his mistake. If he does this he will see the necessity of amending the Bill, and of giving consideration to an amendment which will probably emanate from his own side.

Mr. Scaddan: It is the figures here, not the figures in the country.

Mr. BOLTON: But, if you can show figures which the department have not, that will be the test as to whether the hon. gentleman can be reasoned with. I am prepared to leave it to that test. The Minister asked for an estimate. I do not claim to be any special prophet in regard to estimating, but on the 30th September I have 10,333 electors. That may not be right, because additions have been put on making it 11,500.

The Attorney General. Take the number at 11,000.

Mr. BOLTON: I consider there are 14,000 electors in the four Fremantle seats as at present defined. It is usual to conclude by saying one will support or oppose the Bill. It is not necessary for me to say I am not going to support the Bill. I recognise that the second reading will be carried. I trust that if a reasonable amendment is moved, and it can be shown that it is reasonable, and the figures cannot be refuted, I hope that at least the Government will accept the amendment, even at the expense of increasing the members of the House.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): I want at the outset to express the pleasure I felt in listening to the very able speech of the leader of the Opposition when he criticised this measure, and when he set out to outline his ideas as to the principle

that should guide us in framing a redistribution of seats. Though occasionally the hon. member did get away from the high plane on which he started, and descended to abuse, still it was a speech decidedly of a constructive character, and I listened to it with much pleasure. That pleasure was added to on finding also that the hon. member had very little criticism of a generally destructive nature to offer against the measure as introduced by the Attorney General. Practically the whole of his criticism of the measure was directed to showing that the principle was a wrong one.

Mr. Holman: You did not have brains enough to understand it.

Mr. JACOBY: However that may be, talking about things and doing things are very different processes. This is a place where some members talk a lot, and think that whilst talking they are doing something. The chief attack, if I may call it an attack, made upon this measure by the leader of the Opposition was that the guiding principle of it was wrong, and that we should depart entirely from the system which has been in force since the advent of Responsible Government in this State, and adopt an entirely new principle. I am not prepared to say that I am opposed, broadly speaking, to the principle of representation upon a proportional basis.

Mr. Scaddan: You are sitting on a rail.

Mr. JACOBY: No, I am not. But, we are in this position as far as this measure is concerned: that it would be highly improper if we were to depart from the principle of distribution recognised by the country without the authority of the country. The members of the Opposition are not themselves agreed upon this particular principle, as admitted by the leader of the Opposition in declaring that he was voicing entirely his own opinion. So that if a majority of the party in Opposition are not prepared to tie themselves to the principle of proportional representation they must be agreed that we should for the present continue under the system now in force of distributing the electorates. We are therefore entitled to assume that the majority of

the members of the Opposition are against a departure from the present system.

Mr. Walker: That is pure assumption.

Mr. JACOBY: As the policy of that party is decided by a majority of caucuses I presume that if a majority of the party had been in favour of proportional representation the leader of the Opposition, instead of taking care to announce that he spoke for himself individually, would have spoken for his party. I suppose I am safe in saying the proposals put forward by the hon. member were proposals of his own, and were not made on behalf of his party. He himself distinctly stated it was to be understood that he was speaking for himself, and not for his party. I am entitled to assume therefore that the Opposition are themselves in favour of a continuance of the present system of distribution.

Mr. Gill: You have no grounds for that assumption.

Mr. JACOBY: Then why did the leader of the Opposition state that he was speaking on his own behalf and not on behalf of his party? There is no question that the hon. member took care to say he was speaking purely for himself.

Mr. Scaddan: Who are you speaking for?

Mr. JACOBY: I listened with very great care and attention to the leader of the Opposition, and perhaps I may ask the same consideration for myself. The present system practically recognised as the leading principles of a redistribution is community of interests.

Mr. Heitmann: By whom?

Mr. JACOBY: If hon. members do not agree with me they might listen to me, at all events.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not persist in interjecting.

Mr. JACOBY: In giving effect to this principle we give advantage to the far-distant electorates, and to the scattered agricultural electorates also. That being admitted, we come down practically, not to an attack upon the principle guiding the Government in bringing in this measure, but upon the details of that principle. The attack has been made, not

upon the principle itself, but upon its details, and the hon. members who have addressed themselves to the question have practically followed to the same extent. The hon. member for North Fremantle made a very earnest appeal to the House to give special consideration to the claims of Fremantle; but I would like to remind him that any alternative which has been suggested, if given effect to, must be to the still greater disadvantage of Fremantle, as far as representation is concerned. Under proportional representation Fremantle must be worse off than under the proposed system. If Fremantle is to be included in the metropolitan electorate, as it may be, how would Fremantle stand with its smaller numbers compared to the adjoining Perth electorates?

Mr. Scaddan: Do you understand the guiding principle?

Mr. JACOBY: Certainly. They would get the representation to which they were entitled by their numbers, and by the particular interests and according to the strength of particular interests in the particular electorates. But the leader of the Opposition went further than advocating representation upon a proportional basis; he suggested representation upon an electoral population basis. Is the alternative preferable to the system adopted in this Bill? There might be a system of proportional representation, taking population as the basis and not electoral population. The member for Ivanhoe represents an electorate that is largely composed of bachelors, and in those circumstances we can easily understand that he should prefer a distribution of electoral power according to electoral strength rather than according to actual population. I submit that if we were to have a distribution upon the basis of population the agricultural districts would come out even better than under the present Bill.

Mr. Collier: Yes, if you include the cattle and horses.

Mr. JACOBY: The claim of the hon. member for Ivanhoe in that respect is a claim that has not been generally recognised when talking about representation upon a population basis, because it is generally understood when dealing with

representation on a population basis that the actual population is taken into account and not the electoral population.

Mr. Scaddan: Give me one authority in any part of the world for that.

Mr. JACOBY: The Commonwealth itself.

Mr. Scaddan: No, electoral population.

Mr. Bath: In no country in the world is the electoral system based on population.

Mr. JACOBY: We would certainly not have had this particular claim for distribution upon the basis of electoral population had it not been for the fact that the member for Ivanhoe represents an electorate that is largely composed of unmarried men. I would ask, presuming that there exists in the House to-day a majority of members in favour of a radical alteration in the principle of distribution of electorates, would the House be justified, without consulting the electors themselves, in agreeing to any such alteration? There has not been any mandate from the electors that there should be an alteration of the principle, and until there is that mandate there is no justification for this House to bring in any distribution based on any other principle than that now in existence. The greatest difficulty that I find in connection with a system of representation purely on a proportional basis is that it undoubtedly centralises the governing power. It is all very well for members who sit for the goldfields towns and the metropolitan electorates to argue for the adoption of this system, but if we were to adopt it in its entirety, and to distribute the electorates on a basis of population, whether electoral or actual, we should rob the distant electorates of the small power they at present possess in the government of the country and would centralise it in the large centres of population. If we were to have a system proposed on a proportional basis, qualified by special consideration for the distant and country electorates, there would be a good deal to be said in favour of it, and personally I would be prepared to submit to the people whom I represent some

such scheme, and urge its endorsement; but to ask the House to agree to a system that is to practically place the major portion of the governing power in the hands of those who are more than fully represented already, is to ask for something to which I hope the country will never agree. We heard one of the members for Fremantle complaining very bitterly of the proposal to reduce the representation of Fremantle by one seat, and we heard other members of the Opposition talking about the injustice that is being done to the metropolitan area by not giving it representation more on a population basis than the present Bill proposes to do. But I would ask hon. members to reflect for one moment on the representation already possessed by the metropolitan area. Adding to those who represent metropolitan constituencies, members whose main business interests are in the city, we have already some 24 members in this House either sitting for metropolitan districts or largely interested in business in that area. If the city itself had no representation whatever the knowledge of the members who sit in the House would be sufficient in every case to do full justice to the metropolitan area. Unfortunately in Australia to-day we have this extraordinary position, that half of the population of two of the States is practically contained within city boundaries, and even in this young State, depending as it does so largely on the production of the workers in the mines, and the timber and agricultural industries, fully 32½ per cent. of the population is concentrated in the metropolitan area, yet we find in every attempt to alter the representation a demand for increased representation for the city. The member for North Fremantle spoke of the increased activity that is evident at the port and stated that this is due to the prosperity of the agricultural districts. Of course it is; every mile of railway added to this State, whether in the agricultural or the goldfields districts adds to the prosperity of the capital, and its port; and yet the hon. member, while asking in one breath why the agricultural areas should receive greater representation, states the next moment that owing to the development of agriculture Fre-

mantle is in a more flourishing condition than ever before. In those circumstances, is it not our duty to see that the portions of the State on which all depend for sustenance suffer no injustice in the redistribution of electoral representation?

Mr. Collier: Then you will oppose that Kalgoorlie reduction?

Mr. JACOBY: I am talking about the principles which have guided me in coming to a conclusion. There was one other point on which the leader of the Opposition laid great stress when speaking as to the advantages of proportional representation. He stated that the big electorate gets rid of the parish pump. Those who have been watching the trend of events in the federal political arena will have seen that the parish pump is worked as hard there as anywhere else; it is being worked for all it is worth, and to such an extent that if one should happen to receive a document or petition to send to the Deputy Postmaster General, the Federal members, so fearful are they of not getting kudos for anything done in the local centres, insist that all answers shall be sent to them and not direct to the people interested. Whatever be the cause, the fact remains that the big electorates do not get rid of the parish pump. In Australia, under the conditions existing to-day, the Governments come into closer contact with the people of the State, in minor matters as well as larger matters, than is the case in any other of the British dominions, and whilst the Government continue to take such a close interest in the details of the country's development, surely it becomes part of the duty of a member to see that his constituency has its claims fully considered. Indeed it cannot be expected that any other conditions are likely to exist until the small affairs are taken out of the province of the Government and handed over to the local bodies.

Mr. Scaddan: Political principles are never dealt with by candidates nowadays.

Mr. JACOBY: Of course not, and the hon. member must recognise that the people have a right to elect whom they like, and no member has a right to dictate to the people as to whom they shall have to

represent them. The leader of the Opposition would no doubt like to make the choice, and a pretty choice it would be. I would be sorry for the country if it was run by men of his choice. A great attack has been made on the increase of the agricultural representation in this Bill, but members pushed aside the figures quoted by the Attorney General.

Mr. Holman: Faked figures.

Mr. JACOBY: Of course. The hon. member had his opportunity to do things in this State and not talk about them, and he should remember those days.

Mr. Holman: I stopped you from getting a special train, anyway.

Mr. JACOBY: Some members bring into this House the methods of the football field. Surely we ought to consider these things upon their merits. What does it matter what any hon. member says about myself for instance? What damage can it do. It would not injure me one bit, no matter what they say.

Mr. Underwood: You resort to the methods of the race-course tout.

Mr. JACOBY: Let us stick to the business of the country that is before us. The goldfields have lost since the last redistribution some 6,000 of electoral population, equal to about 23 per cent., whilst, on the other hand, the agricultural districts have gained some 10,000 in electoral population, representing 46 per cent. In addition we have the statement from the Minister for Lands that during the last year some 3,000 new settlers have gone upon our lands.

Mr. Angwin: Where have they gone?

Mr. JACOBY: They have not gone to Fremantle.

Mr. Angwin: They have.

*(The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)*

Mr. JACOBY: Fortunately for the people represented by the hon. member, a large proportion of the production of these people will go to the port, and the metropolitan area will get a large proportion of the wealth these people will produce. These 3,000 additional electors will represent a larger population. A man does not go on the land by himself. Statisticians assure us that each man takes four others with him when he settles on

the land, and if these figures are to be taken as a guide, the 3,000 settlers on the land last year will represent in our agricultural districts an increase of population of something like 15,000. Let me also remind hon. members that practically nine out of 10 of the settlers in the State are busy extending their holdings. Every farmer is increasing his production as hard as he can do so, and every orchardist is increasing his production as hard as he can do so, and the same practically can be said in regard to every class of cultivation in the State. If we are to talk about the extension of population in the State, there can be no extension to the same degree as the extension that will take place in the agricultural districts.

The Attorney General: There are 10,000 proprietary farmers to-day.

Mr. JACOBY: I wish to say a word or two as to how I view that particular part of the Bill that has been referred to in such acrimonious terms by the Opposition. "Gerrymandering" has been a word used about every 10 minutes during this debate. But I have to say again there is a good deal more talking about a thing than doing a thing. Stating a thing is so does not necessarily mean it is so. The Sussex electorate has been quoted as an illustration of gerrymandering. If we are to distribute seats, having community of interest as the first consideration, how could that seat be other than it is? If it is wrong to make a homogeneous electorate of Sussex, why is not an attack made on the Government for altering the Collie electorate in the way it has been altered? Sussex has been altered to make it an agricultural electorate. Either one thing or the other had to be done, if we are to observe the guiding principle on which the Bill has been framed; and as the main interests of the district were agricultural, nothing else could be done but to make it an agricultural electorate. As the Collie seat exists to-day it is an extremely doubtful seat for the Labour party.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It is not. I will put my resignation in with you to-morrow.

Mr. JACOBY: It is generally considered an extremely doubtful seat.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Not at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JACOBY: At any rate, I have been so informed. The hon. member may have justification for holding a different view, but I am here to express my own views.

Mr. Underwood: You do not accept the challenge.

Mr. JACOBY: The hon. member will want to bet on it next, I suppose; and that would be another method of debate.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Surely an ex-Speaker could beat me.

(Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.)

Mr. JACOBY: There must be some truth in what I say, otherwise it would not rouse so much ire on the part of the hon. member; it would rather cause him amusement if I were wrong. I take it as strenuous support of the proposition I put forward that the hon. member gets cross when he hears it. The principle of proportional representation is altogether a representation of classes. If we could imagine for a moment that the Collie and Sussex seats as at present constituted were formed into one seat for the purpose of returning two members under a proportional system, what would be the result? There would be one Labour member and one agricultural member returned under the proportional system. To turn the Collie and Sussex seats into one electorate with two members or more, the result would be a division of interests. There would be just as many agricultural members as Labour, because the two interests are practically divided in the district. The Bill does not do any more than that. It will mean the return of one agricultural representative and one Labour representative. Under the circumstances I ask what justification in reason there can be for terming such a redistribution gerrymandering. One member says in a loud tone, "Look at the map of the Collie electorate." One cannot shut his eyes and draw lines, as no doubt that hon. member would do if he were entrusted with the task. That would be a very easy way of getting over it; but



if we are at all to consider the interests of the people and to get some community of interest, we must follow lines to secure community of interest and not geographical lines. There is only one alternative, and that is following geographical lines, and I ask the hon. member if he would do that. We have had an attack made upon the distant electorates in the far North. Complaint is made that these electorates are over-represented because it is proposed to give the same number of members as in the past.

Mr. Swan: They are not over-represented, but they have too many votes.

Mr. JACOBY: Surely some consideration is to be given to this part of the State if we are going to attempt to develop it. Who of us in the southern area or on the eastern goldfields would willingly drop any district we represent to take up the arduous task of representing one of the northern districts? It is the most arduous task in the House to represent those electorates. People of the North are carrying on a most difficult task under most trying circumstances. If any people should be heard with good effect it is those who are so far away from the metropolis. We look anxiously for the development of these northern districts to provide some kind of military defence in our country. We know it is there where a weakness lies from a military point of view; we know that if any enemy is likely to establish a base from which he can operate to attack the more populous parts of Australia it will be on the northern areas; and in the circumstances, not only should we maintain the representation of the northern districts, but we should seek to retain it in every possible way. We depend entirely on the members who represent those districts to get some idea of the conditions existing in the North and of the principal means by which Parliament can assist in the development of the North. There are opportunities for other members to visit the North, but how many of us accept those opportunities to make personal investigations? People do not go to those

districts for pleasure. If we wish to give any individuals in the State some political power more than is possessed by metropolitan representatives, it should be to those representing the northern districts. And seeing how important it is from every point of view that we should encourage in every way possible the development of the North, I hope no attempt will be made in this House to reduce its representation.

Mr. Scaddan: Do you not see that 700 electors of Roebourne have as much say in legislation affecting gold mining interests as in that affecting Roebourne?

Mr. JACOBY: Does the hon. member seriously propose to reduce the representation of those districts?

Mr. Scaddan: I have given you my ideas of representation, though you have been unable to grasp them.

Mr. JACOBY: The hon. member is entitled to his ideas, but I certainly object if he proposes to deprive the northern districts of any representation they now possess. We have only to look to the Northern Territory of South Australia where we find 8,000 electors.

The Attorney General: No; 869.

Mr. Holman: You have misread your instructions.

Mr. Scaddan: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. JACOBY: It is a telegram from the Premier of South Australia, a Labour Premier. He points out that they have 869 electors in the Northern Territory, while on the rolls of the State there are 183,418 electors. If in these circumstances South Australia is prepared to give two representatives for 869 electors in the Northern Territory, what justification can there be from our point of view for refusing four seats for 3,700 electors in the North?

Mr. Angwin: That is wrong; it is 3,545.

Mr. JACOBY: It does not matter for a figure or two. I hope hon. members will realise it does not matter how perfect a scheme may be in theory, if it is going to work out badly in practice the theory is absolutely worthless. We

find in Australia it has been absolutely necessary for our development that we should give greater representation and political power to country electorates than is given to town electorates; but in spite of that we have had large congregations of people growing to a position under conditions which do not exist anywhere else on the earth; and if we look for a reason we can only find the answer in this, that there has been undue political power given to the cities. When the man who handles the wealth of the country is possessed of political power to the disadvantage of the man who is producing the wealth, then it is not good for the country. If we gave our main representation to the men who are doing the work of the country and producing the wealth, we should not have this extraordinary position to-day where in all the States of Australia an undue proportion of the population exists in the cities. In the United Kingdom you find only  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total population living in the city of London. If you take the proportion of people in London to the proportion in England alone you will find it 20 per cent. If you go to countries further afield where agriculture has been prosperous and is still prosperous, you find that the proportion of metropolitan residents decreases accordingly. In France, which is recognised as the most prosperous agricultural country in the world, only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the people live in the capital city. In New Zealand similar conditions exist.

Mr. Johnson: This is due absolutely to small areas.

Mr. JACOBY: These figures are only some indication if not sufficient proof, that if we are going to make a country wealthy we can only do it by building up the country population and we can only do that, as we shall have to do it in Australia, by making the conditions of life in the city less easy, and carry comfort and convenience to the people who are doing the work in the country. Are we on the right track in rushing into new

proposals and centralising political power in the big cities and taking it away from the country? I congratulate the Attorney General upon the ability with which he has placed this Bill before Parliament, and although I have heard many speeches against it, and some portions of it have been criticised, and the proposal for proportionate representation has been referred to, there has been nothing put forward except some modification of the present system in existence by those members who believe that the electorates would be better distributed by the adoption of some other method.

Mr. Scaddan: You do not understand it.

Mr. JACOBY: The hon. member does not possess all the understanding. Until the electors send a majority to this House decidedly in favour of an alteration of the system, I submit that no other system than the one proposed can be put into force, and under the circumstances I consider that the Bill before the House is a fair compromise.

On motion by Mr. Foulkes, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1910-11.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Brown in the Chair.

Departments of the Attorney General and Minister for Education (Hon. J. L. Nanson, Minister).

Vote—*Crown Law Offices*, £8,067:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson): The Crown Law Department, unlike the Mines or the Lands Departments is not one that may be called a developmental department of the State, and it is not necessary therefore to go at equal length into all the minutiae of administration. At the same time, if there are points upon which hon. members desire information, when I know of these points, I shall of course deem it my duty to do my best to elucidate matters. I may state that during the last financial year the department was carefully and economically administered, as I think is illus-

trated by the fact that the estimate for the year was only exceeded by the sum of £100. This was due in some measure, largely indeed, to several officers having been due during that year for long service leave and having taken that leave, when it became necessary to obtain temporary assistance. In this year's estimates the increase in expenditure is set down at £600. Of this amount over £400 is to cover a new appointment, that of Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman, which has been made not only in the interests of the Crown Law Department, but primarily that the officer may be of assistance to members in this Chamber and another place. Although the cost of this officer is borne on the vote of the Crown Law Department, a portion of the salary might fairly be debited to the Parliamentary establishment. Members will see, looking at the Estimates in detail that there is provision for increases in the staff and some increases in salary, but that these increases are in a very large measure counterbalanced by savings made on other items, as is evidenced by the fact that while the expenditure is only some £600 in excess of that of last year, nearly two-thirds of that amount is represented by the salary of a new officer. As regards the Electoral Department, which is one of the sub-departments of the Crown Law Department, although hon. members take some exception to the figures which have been supplied by the Electoral Department in connection with the redistribution of seats, I hope that none the less they are willing to give due credit to the head of the department, the Chief Electoral Officer, whose ability has been exemplified in a report which the Government have recently placed before hon. members on the systems of electoral representation, and which has gained unqualified encomiums from members of both sides of the House. During the year the Electoral Department undertook an electoral canvass in conjunction with the Federal electoral authorities. That electoral canvass took place in October and November of 1909. It is interesting to recall this fact, because it disposes to some extent of the objection raised in the debate on the Redistri-

bution of Seats Bill that the figures supplied by the Electoral Department are unfair, they are not political figures in any sense of the term, but are devoid of party colour; members will admit the Chief Electoral Officer can be relied upon to supply figures purely of a non-party character. I think the fact that there has been a census within the last 12 months will show that the estimates of the department, although they may not be absolutely correct, cannot be altogether astray. Indeed, where we did take a test of the figures, in order to ascertain how far the work of the Electoral Department was correct, we found that the agricultural and coastal districts where the census was taken had been credited with a smaller number of voters than they were actually entitled to, while the goldfields districts, where the census was also taken, had been credited with a considerably higher number of electors than they really had. Of course the Electoral Department in framing these estimates of voting strength have to rely to some extent upon officers who, though connected with the department, are not required to give up the whole of their time to the work of keeping the rolls in order; for in small centres it is necessary to have one officer to do the work of a number of different departments, because the business in that particular locality is not sufficient to keep him engaged purely on the work of one department, and one only. Of course the Electoral Department during the past few months has been considerably occupied in supplying the Government with information in regard to the Redistribution of Seats Bill, and when hon. members opposite, under pressure of a little temporary excitement, talk about figure-faking, and use expressions of that kind in regard to the statistics, it would be well if they remembered that the figures we use are not figures brought forward by politicians, but have been obtained by absolutely non-party officials, officials of whose political feelings we have absolutely no knowledge, and who, I do not for a moment suppose, are influenced to the smallest extent in the

compilation of their returns by the political party to whom their sympathies may go out. As regards the central office of the Supreme Court, it has been found possible to slightly reduce the clerical staff. An apparent increase of judges' associates this year is simply the result of a saving effected last year owing to one associate being absent on leave without pay. I may say that the work of the Supreme Court during the year slightly fell off so far as litigation is concerned. This may no doubt be to the public a matter for congratulation, although not a matter for congratulation to every member of the House. Even assuming that litigation is a necessary evil, it will generally be found that when times are good there is an increase in litigation. I suppose it is because people can then better afford to go to law in an endeavour to enforce what they consider to be their rights. However, last year the work of the Supreme Court showed, so far as litigation is concerned, a slight decrease. For instance, writs issued fell from 1,125 to 990, and I am glad to say also the criminal cases decreased from 167 to 158. In the Official Receiver's office it has been necessary to make some changes, owing to three senior officers having left the department in order to avail themselves of the civil servants' land settlement scheme. There has, however, been a marked decrease in the number of estates which have been dealt with, although the assets available, liabilities and distributions have increased.

Mr. Hudson: Can you account for the increase in the salary of the Official Receiver?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly I shall be able to deal with that when we come to the item on the Estimates. With regard to Supreme Court contingencies, there has been some saving in the amount provided for witnesses and jurors, and while this has been partly due to the fewer number of cases tried during the year, it is also to be accounted for, I contend, by the care exercised by the responsible officers in the department in dovetailing cases so

as to put the public to the least inconvenience. And while, of course, overlapping must occur and some individuals must be kept waiting, there has been, I think it can be conclusively shown, a considerable improvement during the past few years. In the Titles Office matters for some time past were exceedingly quiet, but at the present moment the Titles Office is busier than it has been for a long time. A good deal of additional work has, of course, been thrown on the office by the amendment of the Land Transfer Act passed last year, which brought leases under the Act; but in addition to that there has been a very considerable increase of business owing to the greater prosperity in the State, to the greater confidence that is felt in the future of Western Australia, and the greater readiness on the part of property holders to once again embark upon dealings with their estates. One of the most infallible indications of an improved state of things is the volume of business passing through the Lands Titles Department, and it is an encouraging sign that at the present time the department should be working at high pressure. Indeed, we are faced with a considerable amount of difficulty in obtaining officers who have the requisite experience to deal with this class of work.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yet one officer in the department is getting £170 after 17 years' service—the salary he started with.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is one of the cases, I suppose, which the Public Service Act was passed in order to provide for. And I always understood—I was not in the Chamber when the Act was being debated—I understood the very object of the Act was that the salaries of officers were to be fixed by the Commissioner, and political interference with salaries leading to lengthy discussions in the House was to be a thing of the past. But instead of the Public Service Act reducing political pressure I find, on returning to the political arena of this State after three years spent outside of Western Australia, that the political pressure exercised in this

Chamber in regard to alleged grievances of individual officers is more than double what it was in the past when no Public Service Act was in existence. To my mind it is a disappointing fact, and gives us reason to ask ourselves whether non-party control of the public service can by any chance be a success when hon. members are ready on every occasion to bring into this Chamber the claims of individual officers. I quite realise the right of Parliament to interest itself in almost any subject under the sun, in questions of the greatest magnitude, and in questions almost infinitesimal in their importance; and if hon. members think the best interests of the country are being conserved by the spending of long hours in this Chamber in dealing with grievances of individual officers, well, they are entitled to their opinion, and it is of course impossible, and it would not be advisable, to attempt to restrain them.

Mr. Hudson: What about the gag you put on last night.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There must be a limit of some sort, and the hon. member is as well aware as I am that where his own party is in power, in the Commonwealth Parliament, and in the Parliament of New South Wales for instance, wherever they have a large majority behind them, the Labour party on coming into office do not hesitate to use the gag. Indeed, I believe the member for Kanowna was himself, when in the New South Wales Parliament, ready to recognise, as every practical man must recognise, that when debate has gone on for a certain time, when everything profitable that can be said on the subject has been said, then Parliament, for its own protection, must place some limit on discussion. We find that in one of the most democratic States of Australasia, I refer to the Dominion of New Zealand, it was found necessary to limit the time occupied in speeches of hon. members. And unless the Parliamentary institutions in this State are to fall into contempt in the estimation of the general public, unless we are to lose any reputation we may possess as a business-like body, as a

deliberative assembly reasonably able to discuss matters, why, then, we must provide means to cope with the verbosity of hon. members.

Mr. Walker: What has this to do with the subject?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It might not have a great deal to do with the matter under discussion, but the moral I wish to point is that if members will interject with irrelevant observations and I choose to follow them, they must blame themselves and not me for diverting from my subject in order to deliver a blow in reply. I see from the observations of the members opposite that they are evidently burning to reach the items, and, desiring as I do, that no unnecessary time shall be wasted, I will endeavour to set an example by resuming my seat.

Mr. WALKER: The explanation of the Attorney General was disappointing inasmuch as there were some matters of detail in connection with the work of his various departments which had not been touched upon. For instance, members wished to know how it was that the electoral office was now taken out of the public thoroughfares, out of Perth, so to speak, and placed in the—

Mr. Hudson: "In the deepest dungeon underneath the castle moat."

Mr. WALKER: It was now placed in the deepest dungeon of the Supreme Court, where prisoners used to be lodged before trial.

The Attorney General: The electoral office is in the same dungeon as I am in.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister deserved to be there; he loved darkness more than light because his deeds were evil, but it was unfair to ask the electors to go down there, and it was unfair to profane the temple of justice, so to speak, by attaching to it other departments. He wondered if, by-and-by, we would not be running a branch of the Agricultural Bank in the basement of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Draper: Or a wash-house.

Mr. WALKER: There was no reason why they should not have a wash-house there; indeed, it was very much required. But there did seem an incongruity in having the Electoral Department adjoining

the Crown Law Department, for no other apparent reason than that both were presided over by the Attorney General. Not only was it a prostitution of the use of the Supreme Court, but it was an injustice to the public. If there was any part of the public offices that should be readily accessible, it was that which supplied lists for the voters' rolls. Now if anybody wished to know if a name was on the roll, he had to wander about half a mile from the public thoroughfares, and half a mile back. That might be an exaggeration of the distance, but the office was certainly out of the general thoroughfares, and out of all roads which the people of Perth travelled unless having business in the law Courts. Why the business of the electoral department should be associated with the law courts he did not know, except that if we had electors such as those at Menzies during the last general election there was reason for the association. Another department presided over by the Attorney General in regard to which he certainly expected some word of enlightenment, was the Titles Office. Practically a new branch had been added to that office because all leases were now brought under its operations, and those leases entailed a vast amount of work upon the officers that ought to receive some sort of recognition, but up to the present had received no recognition. The old permanent officers were ignored; they were not appreciated or recognised, or properly rewarded for the extra duties and responsibilities that were placed upon them, but the department was filled with temporary hands. Not only was extra work placed upon the permanent staff by the addition of the leases to the documents which had to be registered in the Titles branch, but they had to neglect their course of arduous duties in order to train the temporary hands. When six months had been given to the training of the temporary employees they were dismissed and others were taken on in their stead, and the trouble of tuition commenced over again. Was it not a fact that that branch of the department specially required reliable, trustworthy, and trained men? But it

was in that branch of vast importance that temporary hands were employed for the purpose of effecting that economy referred to by the Minister, and which showed the principle of his administration. He had told members with a spirit of triumph that some salaries were to be increased because there had been economies effected by the cheeseparing during the past year. Those economies were being effected by the employment of temporary hands, and underpaid men, and by not advancing the regular men or recognising their work. The Estimates contained provision for the salary of one assistant registrar, but was it not a fact that the title deeds were signed by more than one assistant registrar? Had not the registrar asked that there should be another appointment made?

The Attorney General: The matter is before the Public Service Commissioner now.

Mr. WALKER: Who had to administer the department? A few minutes ago the Attorney General had given Opposition members a lecture about bringing forward matters concerning this department because he had thought before he went to England that the Public Service Act would get rid of all such discussions in the Assembly. Now members found that he could not administer his own department because the Public Service Commissioner would not allow him.

The Attorney General: I must follow the procedure under the Bill.

Mr. WALKER: Who had delayed the Commissioner? The Minister had to recognise the necessity for the appointment, and why had it not been made? If the Public Service Commissioner did not approve of the appointment, would the Minister do it on his own authority?

The Attorney General: I will follow the procedure provided in the Public Service Act. I will not break the law even to please the hon. member.

Mr. WALKER: The Attorney General was not asked to please anybody, but to administer his department, to do justice to his employees, and to allow the work of the State to go along.

Mr. Hudson: The hon. member ought to know that the Public Service Commissioner is only a scapegoat for the Attorney General.

Mr. WALKER: That might be so, but he knew that the Attorney General was not attending to the department, and was putting off week by week the appointment of an Assistant Registrar, and placing the responsibility on the Public Service Commissioner. Did the Attorney General know that there were in this office two surveyors who ought to be in the field survey, but who were kept in the office in Perth, one particularly being used as a sort of assistant registrar and misusing his talents. That was the state of chaos or jumbling and friction in the administration under the Attorney General; yet the whole matter seemed to be overlooked.

The Attorney General: It is not overlooked.

Mr. WALKER: It was overlooked.

The Attorney General: It is not.

Mr. WALKER: Well, the matter had been delayed. What kind of administration was there when everything that was not done satisfactorily was laid on the shoulders of the Public Service Commissioner? Thus Ministers escaped their responsibilities.

The Attorney General: I do not think the Commissioner is delaying it; he is doing nothing of the kind.

Mr. WALKER: Then it was contended no one was to blame. All things could go wrong but nobody had power to right them, and if complaint was made in the Chamber members were lectured. The injustice affected not only the office but the public, and might lead to considerable litigation. It was the duty of the Minister to see the department was administered.

Mr. HUDSON moved—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. Walker: Will the Attorney General give any explanation?

The Attorney General: Yes, when the general debate is finished.

Mr. HUDSON: I will go on with the debate when the Attorney General has

replied to the member for Kanowna. I move—

*That progress be reported.*

The CHAIRMAN: That motion cannot be moved again until a quarter of an hour has elapsed.

Mr. HUDSON: One approached the consideration of any Estimates with some degree of trepidation, because no answers were given, and if the debate was prolonged in order to get answers, members were accused of wasting time and were lectured by the Attorney General. As a schoolmaster the Attorney General might have been a success; as an administrator of the Crown Law Department he was the greatest failure we had had in the Chamber. The Crown Law Department offered very little scope for criticism; it was a meagre department; yet it was necessary to increase the salary of the under secretary to £600 a year to administer a revenue of about £16,000. There was a feeling of unrest in the department, particularly in regard to the employment of temporary hands. The system seemed to be to employ temporary clerks at a low salary in order to avoid paying the higher salary attached to the classified permanent positions. There were 23 temporary hands employed in the department, and apparently there was the same number of vacancies on the permanent staff. There were three temporary hands employed continuously for four years, three for three years, five for two years. The object apparently was to employ hands at 10s. a day to do work which was classified at a higher rate, whereas the intention of the Act was that temporary hands should only be employed for a limited time to meet emergencies. The increases on the Estimates were awarded to men who were the least deserving of them. There were professional men in the department entitled to increases who were not getting them, while those doing the least work but closely associated with the Attorney General perhaps were getting increases of from £50 to £100. Clerks of courts on the goldfields had multifarious duties to perform. They remained in distant localities for a number of years with very little oppor-

tunity for recreation, and when they could get away for holidays it was at times when excursion rates were not available on the railways. The Government might consider a proposition to provide these officers, if not with free passes, at any rate with tickets on the railways at excursion rates, so that they might get to Perth or the seaside with their families. The Minister for Mines and the Attorney General might take note of the fact that the officers employed at Southern Cross as clerks of court and mining registrars had been doing overtime for which they were not paid. When the rush started they were told they were to be paid overtime, that the work must be done and that they would be paid for it. But now the work was done, though it necessitated these officers having to work until after midnight, they were refused overtime allowance. This was a repudiation of an obligation which should not occur in any department. The Government had obtained a revenue of something like £7,000 or £8,000 as the result of the work of these officers during the last two or three months and the claims of these men only amounted to a few hundred pounds. The Government should certainly make them some recompense for the extra hours of labour.

The Minister for Mines: I have heard nothing about their claims.

Mr. HUDSON: The information given him was that allowances for overtime had been refused these officers.

The Minister for Mines: I will look into the matter.

Mr. HUDSON: It was to be hoped that both the Minister for Mines and the Attorney General would take into consideration the work which had been done there. The officer who was there before the rush, it had been said, was incapable of performing the work when the rush came about. He (Mr. Hudson) knew that that officer had been overworked for more than two or three years.

The Minister for Mines: That is not the case; he was removed at his own request.

Mr. HUDSON: The officer was told that he was not capable of doing the work

and that he would be permanently reduced.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct.

Mr. HUDSON: The information was supplied, not from the officer himself, but from another source.

The Minister for Mines: He is a good officer and we know it.

Mr. HUDSON: As far as the other matters were concerned they would be referred to by him when the items were reached.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): With regard to the removal of the electoral offices from premises which were formerly occupied in Barrack-street to the basement of the Supreme Court buildings, the position was simply that at the present time the Government found that the demand upon their available office accommodation was considerably in excess of the supply of such accommodation. The offices previously occupied by the Electoral Department were by no means suitable as far as the building was concerned, although he was ready to admit that regarding locality and convenience of position, both these were better than the situation at the Supreme Court building. As far as convenience to the department was concerned the change was an advantageous one. The Government had to find room for various departments, and in that portion of the Supreme Court buildings, occupied by the Crown Law Department, there were some vacant rooms and after making some small structural alterations, it was found possible to adequately house the Electoral Department. As showing the difficulty with which the Government was faced at the present time in regard to shortage of office accommodation, which might be overcome to some extent when the new Federal post office was erected, it should be mentioned that owing to the great expansion of the business of the Lands Department it had become necessary for the Education Department to vacate its quarters in that portion of the Government offices, and as there were no Government buildings available it would be



necessary to temporarily house the Education Department in offices to be rented. He hoped that that arrangement would not continue for a long time because it was not desirable that the Government should avail themselves of private offices. As a matter of emergency, however, this had to be done. It could hardly be contended that it was in the interests of economy, when there were suitable offices in the Crown Law buildings that these offices should be left empty and that accommodation should be rented from private property owners in some more central part of the city. The Supreme Court, one was bound to admit, was not in the very centre of the city, but when all was said and done it was sufficiently central for all ordinary purposes. It was within two minutes' walk of the general post office and not very much further from the majority of the Government offices, and, although a large number of people visited the Supreme Court on business connected with litigation, there was a good deal of business done within that building which had no connection with litigation. There were branches of the public business which affected a considerable body of the general public and it could not sincerely be argued that the inconvenience to the public was so serious that the Government should refrain from using these particular offices which happened to be available. If the offices in the basement of the Supreme Court were so wholly unsuitable for the purposes of electoral offices it might with equal justice be claimed that the Supreme Court should be removed, as well as all the offices connected with the Supreme Court and the Crown Law Department, to a more central site. In every large city it became necessary to some extent to decentralise the public offices. The Federal Government proposed to build a new post office and it was understood that the site would be some little distance from the existing establishment. The distance would be as great as the distance from the main block of the Government offices from the Supreme Court building, and as time went on it would be necessary to have public buildings in various parts of Perth. This

would possibly mean some inconvenience to a few members of the public, but it would certainly be to the advantage of the city as a whole, and that inconvenience became a diminishing factor, as in every large city, facilities for getting about were increased. He was unable to hold out any hope at the present time that the electoral offices would be removed to another site when the Government had offices of its own available. If it should happen that the accommodation required by the Crown Law Department was overtaxed, certainly the question of removing the electoral offices would come up for consideration. But at the present time he would not be justified in holding out hope of renting offices from private owners when we had accommodation of our own. As regards the work in the Titles Office, he admitted there was an unduly large proportion of officers on the temporary staff; only to-day had he gone into that matter with the under secretary and the Public Service Commissioner. He agreed with the member for Dundas as to the necessity of keeping down the temporary officers in the department. When it was seen that a temporary office was likely to become permanent, then it should be made permanent with the least possible delay. He hoped it would be practicable presently to make some further permanent appointments in the Titles office and thus diminish the number of temporary employees; although if the work continued to increase as it had been doing it would be necessary to increase the staff. As regards the matter referred to by the member for Kanowna, the selection had already been made by the Public Service Commissioner, and any delay that had occurred had been caused by the perfectly legitimate action of the Commissioner in ascertaining, before he made the appointment, as to whether there was anyone in the public service to whom preference could be given. The question of increases could be dealt with at a later stage. He was entirely with the member for Dundas in the suggestion as to endeavouring to give officers of the Crown Law Department on the goldfields an opportunity of coming to the coast

whenever opportunities offered. This was actually done. It was in the best interests of the department that it should be so, because it afforded a healthy change, and the efficiency of the department depended very largely on the health of its officers. As regards what had been said about officers working day and night and being disallowed overtime, he had no actual knowledge of the particular cases, but if the member for Dundas would furnish him with the particulars he would have inquiry made.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Friday, 6th January, 1911.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION — TIMBER TROUBLE, LAKESIDE.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Railways: Has his attention been drawn to the following paragraph in this morning's *West Australian* in reference to the trouble in the goldfields firewood industry—

Orders have come from the headquarters of the Government railways to bring the ten locomotives and the trucks hitherto used in conveying firewood to the mines down to the agricultural districts, where this additional rolling stock will be put into service to bring produce to the seaboard.

Is that statement correct, and what had induced the department to take that ac-

tion at such an early stage in the trouble on the goldfields? Does not the Minister consider that that action is likely to embitter the parties rather than bring them together?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I have not the slightest knowledge of whether or not the statement in the newspaper is correct, but I have rung up the Railway Department and have asked them to look into the matter and advise me by telephone. As soon as I get a reply I will convey it to the hon. member.

### BILL—YORK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE TRANSFER (PRIVATE).

*Second Reading.*

Order of the Day read for resumption of adjourned debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Municipality to discharge liabilities of Institute:

Mr. ANGWIN: It was only fair that members should have some information in regard to the duties and liabilities that were being placed upon the municipality.

Mr. Monger: Forty pounds.

Mr. ANGWIN: That was a very small amount, but were the ratepayers of the district in favour of taking over that institute?

Mr. Monger: Yes, by a majority of five to one.

Mr. ANGWIN: Had the ratepayers been consulted, or was it merely that the majority of councillors had agreed to take the institute over?

Mr. MONGER: A referendum was taken and the transfer was carried by a majority of five to one.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Schedule, Title, Preamble—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.