

departments have been in the same situation; that is, they have been suffering from a lack of funds. I know that the Minister for Health is acutely aware of this and has made representation for additional funds to be made available. I sincerely agree with both members that there is a need for the Health Education Council to extend its activities into various regions, and certainly into Port Hedland. That centre could do with the services of one of the officers of the Health Education Council. Perhaps this is the sort of service we could provide in regional Government centres that are to be established in the various parts of Western Australia. This is something I will bring to the attention of the Minister for Health.

The member for Victoria Park said that the Budget will be introduced to the House this week. I do not know whether the Minister for Health has worked out precisely what proportion of his funds will be allocated to the Health Education Council. However I will put to him the views expressed by the members in this House in the hope that the council will be able to extend its activities to the various regions I have mentioned.

Reference was made to certain bodies missing out on the composition of the proposed new council. I think it will be found that where they have missed out this is probably by design in that some of them have indicated that they feel their representatives are not serving any useful purpose. I think the Australian Broadcasting Commission was one of these bodies. The Broadcasting Control Board was another. I understand that these two organisations felt, initially, when the council was first formed, that if they were represented on the council they would get a certain amount of material for use over the air and in the Press. However I do not think this occurred to the extent that these organisations had hoped for, and they have indicated that their representatives on the council are not serving any useful purpose.

The member for Victoria Park referred to the gobbledygook in one of the clauses of the Bill, and his point is well taken by me. On the other hand it is quite possible that it was necessary for the Parliamentary Draftsman to frame the clause in that way. I can assure the honourable member that I spent a great deal of time trying to find out precisely what it does mean. Notwithstanding that I came to the same conclusion as that reached by the honourable member.

I do not think there is any opposition to the Bill. Once again I thank both members who spoke to the measure for the sincerity they showed in paying tribute to the organisation. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.39 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 1st October, 1975

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (15): ON NOTICE

1. ROADS

North-West: Funds

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Health representing the Acting Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the total allocation of funds to be spent on the Great Northern Highway and the North West Coastal Highway in 1975-1976?
- (2) What is the source of these funds?
- (3) What proportion comes from the various Federal grants Acts for roads—including the National Highways Act—and State allocations?
- (4) In summary, what works are planned on the Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway for 1975-1976?
- (5) Apart from allocations to local authorities, what are the principal works planned for the Pilbara and Kimberley not being on the main highways?
- (6) Of these works, which ones will attract contributions by mining companies, and what is the amount of such contribution in each case?
- (7) Without road by road detail, what amounts have been allocated to the eight northern shire councils for their own works programmes?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) to (7) The information sought by the Hon. Member will take some little time to collate. It will be forwarded to him immediately it is available.

2. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Goldfields Areas

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Local Government:

In the Town of Kalgoorlie and the Shires of Boulder, Coolgardie and Dundas—

- (1) What community services and amenities exist that have been paid for by ratepayers through councils, and are available to be used by non-ratepayers living in or visiting the towns named?
- (2) What is the separate population of each council?
- (3) What is the number of ratepayers in each Council?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) This information is not available from Local Government Department records.
- (2) Estimated populations at 30th June, 1974, were—
Town of Kalgoorlie—9 850;
Shire of Boulder—11 950;
Shire of Coolgardie—6 650;
Shire of Dundas—2 600.
- (3) Number of ratepayers—
Town of Kalgoorlie—2 946;
Shire of Boulder—3 657;
Shire of Coolgardie—530;
Shire of Dundas—504.

3. LOCKRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Eaves: Lining

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the Minister, as a matter of urgency, investigate the method employed in the fixing of asbestos sheets to the eaves of the verandahs of the Lockridge High School?
- (2) If the construction of this part of the building is found to be faulty and a potential danger to the students and staff at the school, will the Minister make arrangements to have this hazard rectified without delay?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) The matters raised by the Hon. Member have been referred to the Minister for Works who has advised that appropriate action will be taken.

4. DRIVE-IN THEATRE

South Hedland

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many proposals were received from "accredited developers" for the development of Lot 2431, Paton Road, South Hedland, for the establishment of a drive-in theatre?
- (2) Has the State Housing Commission entered into a lease agreement with any party?
- (3) If not, what progress has been made towards this end?
- (4) From proposals received from, and any other discussions with "accredited developers", has it been revealed that—
(a) the cost of \$82 170 to provide services to the land is considered to be excessive;
(b) the area of 6.1436 hectares is far too large to utilize and landscape, particularly as the conditions stipulate that a further adjacent area of 1.0497 hectares be planted and maintained as a green belt; and
(c) the lease agreement, providing for rental review at five year intervals, is open-ended and unacceptable?
- (5) Why was the land not offered on a conditional purchase basis as was the case with the drive-in theatre site on the "Island" Port Hedland, or at Karratha?
- (6) What are the areas of the two sites mentioned in (5) above?
- (7) What area is the average drive-in theatre in the metropolitan area?
- (8) On average, what would be the cost to provide services (power, water, sewerage, drainage and roads) for a drive-in theatre site in the metropolitan area?
- (9) Are drive-in theatre sites normally held on a leasehold basis in the metropolitan area or towns in the South West Land Division?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) No firm proposals were received, but three accredited developers have requested the opportunity to negotiate.
- (2) No.
- (3) The three companies interested are being contacted in order to commence negotiations.
- (4) (a) In respect of the period of time in which to amortise this amount, the cost of \$82 170 is a problem.

(b) No.

(c) No.

- (5) It is commission policy to offer all commercial sites on a leasehold basis.
- (6) Karratha 2.2662 ha. (5½ acres); Port Hedland 1.3810 ha. (3½ acres).
- (7) Approximately 7-20 acres.
- (8) Varies considerably, depending on the extent of engineering services required, and no acceptable average figures are available.
- (9) It is understood the sites are normally a freehold tenure. In some south-west country towns—where the facility is an uneconomic proposition, the local authority may decide to acquire the land and lease the site on a basis to attract an operator.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Goldfields: Property Valuations

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Local Government:

In reference to the Town of Kalgoorlie, Shires of Boulder, Coolgardie and Dundas—

- (1) How often have properties been revalued in these areas in the last 12 years, and when did they occur?
- (2) What rate in the dollar has been imposed in that time on annual values and unimproved values?
- (3) What amount has been received by councils each year from rating in their areas on—
 - (a) annual values;
 - (b) unimproved values; and
 - (c) special rating in mining agreements with mining companies allowable under Acts of Parliament?
- (4) How and at what rate is (3) (c) arrived at, and what amounts are involved?
- (5) What percentage increase in rates have occurred at each valuation?
- (6) What assistance have councils received from—
 - (a) the Australian Government;
 - (b) the State Government source at that time; and
 - (c) what has been the annual income from each separate council from all sources during the 12-year period?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) to (6) Not all of the information requested is available from Local Government Department records and that which is available would take considerable time to extract. As the councils concerned would be in the best position to provide complete answers, it is suggested that the Hon. Member seek the information direct from each council.

6. TRANSPORT

Bus Services

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the figures given in reply to my question of the 9th September, 1975, under part (1) are incorrect?
- (2) Will he please supply the correct figures?
- (3) As he did not guarantee that retrenchments of MTT employees will not take place in the future, as requested in my question of the 11th September, 1975, will he now give that guarantee?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) No. However, the figures quoted should have been compared against the winter section of the timetable dated the 16th February, 1975.
- (2) 16th February, 1975 Winter Section, Sunday 24; Public Holidays 28.
10th August, 1975 Sunday 22; Public Holidays 28.
The summer build up this season will be continued to the months of December, January and February.
- (3) No.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kalgoorlie and Boulder: Rates

The Hon. R. T. LEESON, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) What is the current rate per dollar of valuation struck by—
 - (a) the Town of Kalgoorlie; and
 - (b) the Shire of Boulder;
 in the following categories—
 - (i) improved value; and
 - (ii) unimproved value?
- (2) When was the rate struck in each instance?
- (3) What has been the corresponding rate or rates in each instance for the three years prior to the dates in (2) above?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) (a) Annual Values—
 General Rate—16 c in the \$;
 Sewerage Rate—4 c in the \$;
 Fire Brigade Rate—1 c in the \$;
 Library Rate—1 c in the \$.
 The Town of Kalgoorlie uses only annual values.

- (b) Annual Values—
 General Rate—15 c in the \$;
 Sewerage Rate—10 c in the \$;
 Fire Brigade Rate—1 c in the \$;
 Library Rate—1 c in the \$.
 Unimproved Values—
 General Rate—6.25 c in the \$;

- (2) Both councils levied these rates at meetings held on 25th August, 1975.

(3)—

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Town of Kalgoorlie			
General Rate	21.5c	21.5c	21.5c
Sewerage Rate	3.5c	3.5c	3.5c
Fire Brigade Rate	2.5c	1.4c	2.2c
Shire of Boulder			
General Rate	22.5c	22.5c	25.0c
Sewerage Rate	3.0c	15.0c	15.0c
and	7.5c		
Fire Brigade Rate			2.15c
Library Rate			1.0c
Unimproved Values			
General Rate	6.0c	5.5c	6.25c
Library Rate			0.125c

8. POTATOES

Rejections

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What have been the weekly rates of rejection by the department's potato inspectors for every week since the 31st July, 1975, at—
 (a) Fremantle; and
 (b) Kewdale?
- (2) What are the names of inspectors at these two sites for those weeks?
- (3) (a) Who were the people or companies that asked for re-inspection during this period; and
 (b) on how many occasions did the reinspection result in rejections?
- (4) (a) What tonnage of potatoes came from the Eastern States in the months of July, August and September, 1975;
 (b) to whom were they consigned; and
 (c) could the Minister table the records of the inspection fees paid?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- | | (a) | (b) |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| | Fremantle | Kewdale |
| (1) August 1 to 8 .. | 1.2% | 11.8% |
| August 10 to 15 | 16.2% | 6.0% |
| August 17 to 22 | 14.3% | 8.2% |
| August 25 to 29 | 14.0% | 9.5% |
| September 1 to 5 | 24.1% | 3.5% |
| September 8 to 12 | 20.9% | 14.4% |
| September 15 to 19 | 12.0% | 9.8% |
| September 22 to 26 .. | Not yet available | |
| (2) (a) Fremantle—M. Turkich, K. Symes. | | |
| (b) Kewdale—W. Daff, L. Muirson, C. Wood. | | |
| (3) (a) Kewdale — Etherington Traders, Wholesale Prepack, Triangle Traders, Fremantle—Sumich & Sons. | | |
| (b) Reinspections—Kewdale 21, Fremantle 4, Rejections—Kewdale 19, Fremantle 4. | | |
| (4) (a) July—361 tonnes;
August—259 tonnes;
September (to the 22nd)—210 tonnes.
Total—830 tonnes. | | |
| (b) The importers—
R. & C. Pezzano—379 tonnes;
M. Italiano—244 tonnes;
Shlam—189 tonnes;
R. Rossi—18 tonnes.
Total—830 tonnes. | | |
| (c) Debit notes covering 29 consignments at the rate of 50c per tonne have been issued. Total fees involved are \$415. | | |

9.

WATER SUPPLIES

Salmon Gums

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that water restrictions are being imposed on residents of the town of Salmon Gums?
- (2) If so, what are the restrictions that are deemed necessary?
- (3) Are there any plans to—
 (a) construct an additional dam and catchment area;
 (b) convert a quarry in the area into a dam, and serviced with a catchment area;
 (c) catch additional water when normal winter rains occur;
 (d) pipe water from Esperance to serve farming towns to as far as Salmon Gums;

(e) cart water to the town by standard gauge water tankers if the eventuality arises?

(4) (a) What would be the estimated cost of (3) (a) to (d); and

(b) are there sufficient water tankers available for the purpose?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Restrictions limiting domestic consumption to 100 litres (22 gallons) per head per day, introduced on September 13, should maintain the supply until June 1976 in the absence of rain.

(3) (a) to (d) The Department is currently investigating various alternatives including (a) to (d). Following the completion of these investigations the implementation of a scheme will depend on future circumstances and demand in the area.

(e) No.

(4) (a) Answered by (3) above. No estimates are currently available.

(b) Not known but alternative transport arrangements could be made if necessary.

10. WATER SUPPLIES

Retrenchment of Employees

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

How many of the employees under threat of retrenchment from the Metropolitan Water Board are employed as—

(a) professional officers;

(b) clerical officers; and

(c) tradesmen?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

(a) to (c) Nil.

11. *This question was postponed.*

12. MINISTERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS

Air Travel

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY, to the Minister for Justice representing the Premier:

When does the Government intend to "reduce public spending" by following the Australian Government's lead in this regard through its decision to insist that Ministers and public servants travel economy class on aircraft travelling interstate?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

The Government has reviewed the question of first-class air travel by Ministers and public servants on interstate flights and has decided not to vary the present practice at this stage.

The great distance between Perth and other capitals, the longer flight time, and the need to use the time spent in travel for preparatory work, are special factors which do not apply to the same extent on the much shorter flights between other capitals.

Moreover, the Government believes that savings can be made more effectively in other ways, including tight controls on the amount of interstate travel undertaken, and dealing with the subject of potential travel in other ways.

However, some aspects of this question are still under study and a final decision has not yet been made.

So far as intrastate air travel is concerned, there is no option.

13. *This question was postponed.*

14.

KARRATHA

Services

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) When is it estimated that the following services will be provided for the first portion of the second residential cell in Karratha—

(a) roads (by stages);

(b) drainage;

(c) electric power reticulation;

(d) water reticulation;

(e) sewerage; and

(f) area landscaping?

(2) How many allotments are to be serviced in this first stage subdivision?

(3) What is the estimated cost to provide the above services to each residential allotment?

(4) Is the cost of "headworks" associated with power, water supply and sewerage, to be a charge against these residential allotments?

(5) At what cost will the residential allotments be passed onto the general public, including mining companies, Government instrumentalities, etc.?

(6) How many unsatisfied applications for residential allotments in Karratha existed on the 30th September, 1975?

- (7) When is it anticipated that applicants will have access to land in this new subdivision?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) (a) Formation by end of October; prime and seal by mid-1976.
 (b), (d), and (e) November, 1975—May, 1976.
 (c) Before lot occupancy.
 (f) Commencing April, 1976.
- (2) 117 single, 18 patio, 10 duplex and 1 medium density.
- (3) Cost of reticulation of services is presently estimated to be of the order of \$7 000.
- (4) Lots released to the public will not include a headworks charge.
- (5) Lots will be released to the public at the cost of reticulation of services presently estimated at \$7 000. Mining companies, under Agreements with the State, and Government departments will meet some of the cost of headworks and will pay a higher rate.
- (6) Lands and Surveys Department has 22 inquiries recorded.
- (7) Land will be available by the end of this year.

15.

KARRATHA

Urban Development

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that in presenting Budget Paper No. 9 associated with the Commonwealth Government's 1975-76 Budget, the Minister for Urban and Regional Development said—
- (a) "This paper is presented as a comprehensive statement of Australian Government programs concerned with urban and regional development. . . . It also covers co-ordination and integration with other policies in other fields such as industrial development";
- (b) "The Australian Government has accepted the responsibility of becoming directly and intensely involved in urban development issues throughout Australia.";
- (c) "In pursuing its urban and regional development policies, the Government seeks to influence long-run processes of social economic change. These policies are directed towards—

- (i) planning for future development to meet national objectives of economic growth;

- (ii) providing residential land at reasonable prices;

- (iii) ensuring that basic public facilities, such as sewerage, water supply, power, transport and communications are available in urban areas."?

- (2) As the urban development work being carried out in Karratha (and also South Hedland) conforms with Mr Uren's clearly stated objectives for expenditure by his department, has the State Government made urgent and specific application for financial assistance with this work?
- (3) If this has not been done, will the Minister make representations to Cabinet with a view to ensuring that the appropriate Minister prepare an application for submission to the Commonwealth Government forthwith?
- (4) In the event of Commonwealth assistance becoming available for this urban development work, will the services premium charged to the general public on each residential allotment be correspondingly reduced from the existing prohibitive level?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Member would be aware, from the document from which he quotes, that the Commonwealth Government funds have been allocated to programmes in the existing major cities and to specific growth centres.

The needs of Karratha and Port Hedland, along with other established communities in Western Australia, were brought to the attention of the Commonwealth Government when the Cities Commission programmes were being initiated. However, funds made available to this State have been confined to Perth and adjacent areas.

- (3) The State will continue to use every avenue to bring to the attention of the Commonwealth all areas requiring assistance in the State, including Karratha and Port Hedland.
- (4) Funds from the Commonwealth to provide services would permit the premium sum to be reduced proportionately.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. J. Heitman) in the Chair; the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short title and citation—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: All members on this side of the Chamber have indicated their opposition to the Bill in its totality, and the title is no exception. I believe there are good reasons for us to attempt to block the passage of the Bill at this stage. The Government has not produced a case to commend its move to any reasonable person. In my opinion we would be entitled to propose an amendment to the title of the Bill by the insertion of the word "gerrymander", so that it would then be the Electoral Districts Gerrymander Act Amendment Bill. I will not move this amendment, Mr Chairman, as it would not be conducive to a good standard of conduct in this Chamber. I merely mention this matter because it shows the attitude of the Opposition to this legislation. We will oppose every clause in the Bill.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. T. O. Ferry
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. V. J. Perry

(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. T. Leeson	Hon. D. W. Cooley

(Teller)

Pair

Aye	No
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. D. K. Dans

Clause thus passed.

Clause 2: Section 3 amended—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The amendment appearing in my name on the notice paper is self-explanatory. I will ask the Committee to agree to the deletion of paragraph (b), with a view to substituting another paragraph. I move an amendment—

Page 2, lines 5 to 7—Delete paragraph (b) with a view to substituting the following—

(b) by deleting paragraph (a) and substituting the following paragraph—

(a) to make inquiries into, and recommendations in respect of the division of the State into fifty-one electoral districts for the election

from each district of a member of the Legislative Assembly;

I do not intend to traverse the ground I covered last night because members would be quite clear as to the policy of the Labor Party. Every elector in Western Australia should have equal representation by the implementation of the principle of one-vote-one-value.

However, that suggestion met with some criticism last night. I was amazed to read the interjection of the Minister for Health when I suggested that the electorates were being gerrymandered to the advantage of country people. He claimed that if this principle were followed, it would be to the advantage of the Labor Party. I do not care whether it would be to the advantage of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Country Party, or any other new party that may come along.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Oh, yes? Tell us another one!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I could not be more honest in my approach to electoral reform. Provided the new metropolitan boundaries are established by the independent electoral commissioners, and provided any proposed redistribution is carried out by them. I would have no objection; I would accept it. I have never objected to a redistribution in my province.

The Minister for Health virtually said that his Government was not going to act in a fair way towards the electors of Western Australia, but was going to demand country loadings to benefit rural voters; equality does not come into it. The Liberal Party platform states that Liberals believe in substantial equality; yet we find before us a Bill which will provide the reverse.

I should like to refer to the comments of the Minister for Justice in reply to my query about the north-west seats. We all know that the Pilbara electorate contains 11 855 voters, while the Kimberley electorate has only half that number, the Gascoyne electorate only one-third of that number, and the electorate of Murchison-Eyre, only one-quarter of that number. I believe the Minister for Justice hit the nail on the head when he said some future Government may have to do something about a redistribution in that area. It is obvious from that remark that his Government has no intention of carrying out such a redistribution.

Although it will have the pretence of retaining loaded country votes, the Government is not prepared to carry out that policy. The Government has a constitutional majority, and is quite able to change the statutory boundaries; however it will not do so for reasons which are quite obvious. If a fair redistribution is carried out in the north-west area, and a portion of the 11 855 Pilbara voters are transferred to the Kimberley, Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne electorates, which could easily be

done by the redistribution of such towns as Mt. Tom Price, Mt. Newman, Witte-noom, Karratha, Dampier, Roebourne, Wickham and others, the Government would be in danger in the future of losing not one seat but four seats. The Government wants to retain the heavily overloaded area of the Pilbara for one purpose, and one purpose only.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: We are waiting to hear.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It is to retain the seats of Kimberley, Murchison-Eyre, and Gascoyne with their low number of electors. The Government fears that because it is not popular it could lose seats if a redistribution took place. I would guess that one seat the Government will certainly lose at the next election would be the Pilbara.

The Government rejected such a redistribution because it does not believe in electoral justice; rather, it believes in staying in Government by the rigging of electorates. This Bill is a classic example of electoral rigging, and my amendment is designed to overcome this problem by dividing the State into 51 electoral districts with approximately an equal number of voters in each, with a 10 per cent variation either way. This would bring equality to every person in Western Australia, as compared with the present system where the votes are rigged by six to one, eight to one, or even 10 to one.

By the admission last night of the Minister for Justice, this is a completely dishonest Government. I was staggered to hear how Government supporters tried to counter some of the arguments put forward by members of the Labor Party in respect of this legislation. At page 9 of his notes, the Minister for Justice stated—

The principal reason for allowing a greater allowance in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area is that, particularly in the more remote parts of the State—

I want members to keep the word "remote" in their minds. The Minister continued—

—it is more difficult to give proper regard to other criteria of community interest, means of communication, distance from the capital, and physical features if the numerical allowance is limited to 10 per cent.

The word "remote" has been used frequently by members of all parties during this debate. But I challenge any member opposite to tell me what person in Western Australia is politically disadvantaged.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Due to remoteness.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is right. If my amendment is carried, the people will be better served because we will not have the loaded areas that we have at present.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Tell us how they will be better served. That is not an answer.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Let the Minister stand and reply when I have finished. He always makes speeches sitting down.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is not an answer to my question. Why do you not answer the question, instead of trying to bluff it out?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course they will be better served, because we will divide Western Australia into 51 electorates, each of which will contain approximately an equal number of voters. But the Minister does not believe in equal representation.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Yes I do.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The statement of Mr Lewis last night was a classic.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I am glad you enjoyed it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: He said that the wealth should vote, not the people.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Again it is obvious that you do not listen. I said that the people who produce should be given the vote.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The wealth of the State.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I said nothing about wealth; I said the producers should have it. I read my speech this morning, and that is what I said. You are anti anybody who produces.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Do not be stupid!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It is the way you go on all the time, with your dogma.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I have as much regard and respect for the farmers as Mr Lewis has, if not more.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I see.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Let Mr Lewis tell me when I have criticised farmers.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It is a figment of his imagination.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Your whole attitude is critical of anybody; your attitude and your dogma are always critical of the producer.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Let Mr Lewis stand and qualify that remark at the conclusion of my speech.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I do not need to qualify my remark.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Mr Lewis cannot; all he can do is sit in his place and tell lies about people without qualification, because he cannot qualify his statements.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Now we are getting under the skin a little; that is good leadership!

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Mr Lewis says that I am opposed to the country people, and that is a direct lie. I am not opposed to country people. I have as much respect for them as Mr Lewis has, if not more.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Why do you not support policies designed to help the country people?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Who does not support such policies?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Lewis opposed orderly marketing schemes.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When have I ever opposed such schemes—to give them a loaded vote? That does not help them. I am sorry for the people in Mr Lewis' electorate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I feel it would be a good idea to stick to the subject matter of the Bill.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When stupid, lying accusations are made against me, it is my right to answer them.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Not if the Chairman does not want you to.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This all started as a result of one of the speeches the Minister for Health makes whilst sitting down. I would like the Minister to tell me of any section in Western Australia which is disadvantaged under the present scheme, because if there is such a section the people concerned would be advantaged under the scheme I am putting forward.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not say they were disadvantaged under the present scheme.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In his speech notes the Minister referred to people being disadvantaged because of their remoteness; indeed much of the discussion last night centred around remoteness.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I did not say they were disadvantaged.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The members on the Government side say that because of the remoteness of the areas concerned it is necessary to have a different formula for people in the country areas. Mr Berry, Mr Tozer, and Mr Withers, represent these areas and I would like them to tell me of anyone in such areas who is disadvantaged.

They might be disadvantaged because of the members they have elected to Parliament; however they are able to write to any member of Parliament and get the service they require. I receive many letters from electors who are not represented by a Labor member, and I attend to their requests.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You do not think you are an orphan.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No. I now come to what I consider to be a real

clanger; it is a real beauty, and is contained on page 8 in the second paragraph of the Minister's notes which states—

It must also be borne in mind, however, that the Bill, by creating four additional electoral districts within the new metropolitan area, is recognising the need to enlarge the number of metropolitan seats so as to enable proper representation to be given to electors within the metropolitan area.

Has anyone ever heard such hogwash? Had the Minister taken notice of the numerous TV interviewers who went onto the streets—and these interviewers were recorded on the programme "This Day Tonight" and repeated from time to time—and had he listened to talk-back sessions on the radio which I had monitored, he would have found that without exception the people expressed the view that at the moment there were too many politicians.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Too many conservative politicians.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We should consider the reduction of the deadwood from politics; of those who are not earning their salaries, because we must appreciate that it costs approximately \$30 000 a year to maintain a member of Parliament. Nobody can say definitely just how much it costs to maintain a member of Parliament; one can only guess at what it costs to maintain the Leader of the House, myself, or Mr Clive Griffiths, as members of Parliament.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It does not take much to keep me.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We can only get an approximate figure. In the metropolitan region it cost each elector about \$4.50 a year to keep a member in Parliament. In the agricultural, pastoral, and mining area, and in the north-west, it costs nearly \$10 per elector to keep a member in Parliament—that is as near as one can get to the figure.

Apart from this it costs many thousands of dollars a year for air fares and travel generally for the members of Parliament concerned; although I do not criticise that aspect because members are entitled to return to their homes or to visit their electors. As I have said, one cannot find exactly how much it costs to maintain a member of Parliament.

Members opposite are out of touch with reality; they are out of touch with the thoughts of the people, because the people feel that there are already too many politicians. That is a fact of life.

I will now get back to the point that currently we have 51 members in the Legislative Assembly. I think we should hold to that figure; we should not increase it. We should divide the State into 51 equal electorates—as near as possible, taking into consideration the remoteness, etc.

I also feel we should hold the number in the Legislative Council at the present figure, so that people in the metropolitan area may have proper political representation; here again I would refer to the Minister's speech notes which I have just quoted.

In the case of the Legislative Council, the same loading does not apply, however, because we are to have six provinces in the metropolitan area. This is out of step and out of balance with what the Minister said in relation to increasing the number of seats. We have two in the north-west and eight in the agricultural, pastoral, and mining area.

If we are to give better political representation to 435 000 people in the metropolitan area we would have to do some arithmetic and come up with a much larger figure of six metropolitan seats, and we would have to cut back on the agricultural, mining, and north-west seats, so that an equal distribution of Legislative Councillors would be made on a *pro rata* basis to the existing number of electors.

But, of course, that is not envisaged. Probably the Minister did not think of it, or he would have made some comment in his notes to the effect that it was not possible to do this in the case of the Legislative Council. It is possible to do it in the case of the Legislative Council; it is possible to make this increase in view of the low number of votes in some of the rural seats. We could extend it to four seats in the Legislative Council.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Who said it is not possible?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Why is the Minister not doing it?

The Hon. N. McNeill: You implied I suggested it was not possible.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Minister is mistaken in what I said. I said it is not possible to bring this situation about by increasing the number of rural seats and by increasing the Legislative Council seats with a view to bringing about a similar balance.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You check your *Hansard* note.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will. What I have said would certainly take place under the amendment I have moved.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The prime purpose the Leader of the Opposition has in mind in moving his amendment is to achieve a position of one-vote-one-value. He indicated this fairly concisely and it was the main theme canvassed at length in debate last night.

The Leader of the Opposition made a great many other points in explaining his amendment which obviously, you, Sir, were prepared to consider sufficiently relevant to the debate. Not surprisingly and understandably the Leader of the Opposition

again went over much of the ground and drew attention to some of the observations made last night.

I ask him to recall that I made a particular point of saying that so far as the seats in the agricultural, pastoral, and mining area are concerned I make no apology for wishing to maintain the number of seats and the representation. I would not consider any other alternative, because I believe it is essential that that representation and number of seats should be maintained.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Therefore your speech notes are not correct, because you want to give the metropolitan area greater representation.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Once again the Leader of the Opposition is endeavouring to put a different construction on this matter. There is a compatibility between my speech and what I said a few moments ago.

I used the words in the speech notes and referred to proper representation; in other words increased representation to enable representation through a greater number of members in the metropolitan area, whilst still maintaining the existing representation in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area.

I was not talking about the numbers in the respective Houses as though there is some division between the country and the metropolitan area. I made no suggestion or implication of that nature. All I am endeavouring to do is to ensure that there is proper representation; and one way to do it is to increase the number of seats in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Have you forgotten what you said? You said there would be 27 metropolitan electorates and 24 agricultural, mining, and pastoral electorates.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition mishears what I say, because I am not disputing that this is what I said.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You have forgotten about it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I have not. I am perfectly aware of what is contained in the notes. Everyone knows why I did not introduce the Bill and use the notes, but I accept responsibility for the notes.

Apart from that, however, let me say that at this hour of the day some of the emotive expressions used by the Leader of the Opposition are likely to make good copy. One cannot help but have the thought that in putting forward this emotional approach the impression is gained that in some areas members of Parliament are, perhaps, maintained at too great a cost to the taxpayer. The Leader of the Opposition indicated a charge of \$10—and I do not know whether that is

the correct figure, but even if it is it is not too much for complete and total representation.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said it was not a correct figure but merely an approximate figure.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: If the cost to each elector were \$10 I believe it is not an undue price for taxpayers to pay for good and complete parliamentary representation.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I did not refer to taxpayers. I referred to the people on the electoral roll.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: All right then, the people on the electoral roll. Of course, all the taxpayers will be paying.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I still maintain it would not be an undue price to pay. While the Leader of the Opposition was advancing his theory Mr Dans supported him. It was suggested that the number of members of Parliament could be reduced. We could extend that a little further and say, "Let us do away with State Parliament altogether".

The Hon. D. K. Dans: When did I say that?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I did not say Mr Dans said that. By interjection, Mr Dans supported the views of Mr Thompson favouring a reduction in the number.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I interjected and said that Mr Lewis did not believe in orderly marketing.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I acknowledge that Mr Dans did make such an interjection, but it will be recalled that he also made a further comment.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I did say it cost \$700 000 to keep this House going. I did not say whether it was big or small. It is a big amount.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I would like to be assured by the Opposition that in fact it is in favour of the retention of State Parliament. We know it is not in favour of the retention of this Chamber.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Have we ever said that we are not in favour of the retention of State Parliament?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I said that I would welcome the assurance that the Opposition is in favour of the retention of State Parliament. I am sure that would be a comfort.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Not of this Chamber though.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It would be a comfort particularly to those who are far more politically conscious; that is, the people in the remote areas, the people who worry about their representation.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us about the remote areas. I am interested.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am sure I do not need to.

The Hon. R. Thompson: No-one else has told us.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition has been around the political scene long enough to know that those in the agricultural, mining, pastoral and north-west areas—the remote areas, or those further removed from the metropolitan area, if that is a better expression—are, if anything, more sensitive to the representation and to the value of representation in their Parliaments, State and Federal. I am not saying there is not an awareness in the metropolitan area, too.

The Hon. R. Thompson: To be sensitive and to be disadvantaged are two different things.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not talking about disadvantages, but about the sensitivity of the people in these areas.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You cannot answer why people in these areas should not have voting strength equal to that of those in the metropolitan area. You are not prepared to answer that.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Obviously the Leader of the Opposition wants me to comment on the people who may be considered to be politically disadvantaged.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is right.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: People in remote areas may be situated anything from 50 to 500 miles from their members of Parliament and they are thus politically disadvantaged in their personal representation compared with those who have ready and daily, and perhaps more than daily, contact with their members of Parliament, Parliament itself, Government departments, and departmental officers. They are disadvantaged, and to the extent that Governments are political, they are politically disadvantaged. Of course they are. It is all very well to say that a person can use the telephone, but not everyone in these areas can do so for various reasons both physical and financial.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is accepted.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is said that these people could write letters, and we are all aware of the situation concerning deliveries. In addition, not everyone has the same capacity and ability to convey to people in writing their true feelings. The Leader of the Opposition ought to know and does know that by far the most effective contact whether in campaigning for election purposes or in representations is personal contact. He knows that. The people who do not have the same availability are politically disadvantaged.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I thought you would gradually get around to obtaining votes rather than to political representation.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: What is the Leader of the Opposition talking about?

The Hon. R. Thompson: You referred to political campaigning. It is person to person contact which counts. They are your words.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I endeavour to keep an equable calm, but I will say something now which I do not very often say. I believe the Leader of the Opposition is probably deliberately twisting my words.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am not. I am following you word for word.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The record will tell us. I will leave it at that. The Leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well what I was saying and meaning.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us about the Pilbara.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I will go no further on this question. The fact of the matter is that the amendment is an absolute fundamental contradiction of the purposes of the Bill and I have no hesitation in opposing it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We have unfortunately been harangued by the Minister for Justice.

The Hon. N. McNeill: When you get harangued by me, it is something.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister is quite right. I can recall some exceedingly long and tedious harangues by the Minister in past sessions, particularly on rural matters.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Very learned ones, too.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The proposition of the Leader of the Opposition is exceedingly reasonable. It proposes there should be 51 electoral districts each represented by one member of Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition has not reached that stage. He has moved only for the deletion of paragraph (b).

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: You are quite right, Mr Chairman, but I hope you will not limit the argument in that way after the Minister has canvassed such a wide field. He did not dwell only on the deletion of paragraph (b), which paragraph is designed to delete the word "fifty-one" and substitute the word "fifty-five".

The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition is quite reasonable because it would mean there would be 51 districts and all members would have much smaller electorates. The disadvantage in the remote areas would be no more than it is under the present situation because most of the agricultural seats have round about

the same number of electors at present. In view of this it is surprising that the Minister replied in the way he did. I simply cannot understand the attitude adopted by the Minister. Of course it is in line with the general approach by the Government to most legislation in this House. This is what it wants and no matter how sound or reasonable our arguments might be the Government will do what it wants, regardless of our entreaties.

If the legislation were to remain as it is and the distribution was continued on the present basis, the agricultural seats would have a quota of approximately 9 250, on the basis of 47 members in the metropolitan area and the agricultural districts. If we left the Act as it is, but extended the boundaries as proposed under the Bill, the quota would then be reduced to approximately 8 760, with 26 metropolitan seats and 21 agricultural seats. When we consider the 26 metropolitan seats and the 21 agricultural seats, perhaps we can commence to understand why the Government is anxious, as the Minister stated, to make this most significant change in the number of metropolitan and agricultural seats. Of course it would have been too fair to the metropolitan voters to have 26 members as against 21, even though the quota for the 26 members would have been approximately 17 500 each.

Compared with the nonmetropolitan seats, it is a rather hefty burden. That would be the situation if the metropolitan boundaries were increased as suggested in this legislation, and the basis of determining the number of seats between the metropolitan and agricultural districts were left as it is.

On the other hand, if we follow the suggestion in paragraph (b) and increase the number of Assembly seats to 55 we have quite a different set of figures emerging—figures which would perhaps more nearly approach what is being created in the legislation itself. I have worked out some figures based on approximately 30 000 electors being transferred into the enlarged metropolitan area, which results in there being 28 metropolitan members and 23 agricultural members, with quotas of 16 250 and approximately 7 940 respectively. Here again we can see the agricultural districts are being further advantaged in having a reduced quota.

I assume the Government believes it is a good thing to reduce the quotas because obviously that is the purpose of paragraph (b), and that it believes members should not have to carry too great a load. But the Government does not set about it with any consistency. It is quite prepared to lower the quota for the country members and to increase it for the metropolitan members. That is hardly fair and reasonable.

In my province there are almost 90 000 electors on the roll, and I confess I find it quite impossible to knock on the doors

of all those people to keep constant contact with them, or even to attend one meeting a year of all the organisations in the district. There are 23 kindergartens or pre-school centres in my electorate.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Are they coming over into the Government's scheme?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not want to dwell on that. At a recent meeting, only one of the 23 in the City of Stirling indicated it would like to join the Government's scheme.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I would have as many kindergartens as you have and they are spread over 400 or 500 miles.

The CHAIRMAN: We are getting away from the subject.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was saying there are approximately 90 000 electors in my province and a considerable overall population if we take into account the pre-school centres, the schools, the junior sporting clubs, and so on. There are difficulties involved in representing a province such as mine, which covers between 45 and 50 square miles. The area is not so great compared with that of some other electorates, but there is a far greater problem in trying to keep contact with the people and satisfy their ordinary expectations in regard to their member of Parliament.

A scheme which would produce 51 electorates is to be preferred to the present system, whereby members such as I are so disadvantaged in regard to the number of electors we represent. I hoped we would have from the Government a more reasonable approach in attempting to meet the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition to delete paragraph (b) of this clause with a view to inserting a new paragraph (b).

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I rise to support the deletion of paragraph (b). I will avail myself of the opportunity to set the record straight in regard to a couple of statements which were made in the second reading stage and perhaps some comments which have been made here today.

It was suggested that the speech I made in opposition to the Bill was extremely gloomy. That worried me immensely, so I read it today.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I have thought of a better expression for it—a morbid recitation.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Having read the *Hansard* report, I think my speech was quite bright. Secondly, someone suggested I had been threatening people. I am probably the most peaceful person in this Chamber; I am not gloomy and I certainly do not go around threatening people. When I read my speech I could not find any hint of a threat.

We are dealing with a very important amendment which seeks to delete certain

words and substitute other words. I think members would agree that the whole range of amendments put on the notice paper by the Leader of the Opposition virtually sinks or swims on the first amendment. Whether or not we argue the others remains to be seen.

A great deal has been made of the need for adequate representation of country areas. I do not want to canvass the subject any further because the country electorates virtually remain unchanged, although I do not know what the quotas will be. What disturbs me is the line that has been drawn around the metropolitan area. I am fairly sure I know who worked it out. I do not suggest that officers working for the Minister for Justice drew it on the map. The line is the result of a political decision and the Government, having the numbers, is quite entitled, under the present form of government and the manner in which we proceed here, to make that political decision.

The amendment under discussion seeks to achieve some equality of representation. I am very disturbed about what will happen within the metropolitan area. It does not take one very long to see the compression which is taking place, or to predict the decision of the commissioners. I am not suggesting the commissioners are crooked but I am fairly sure of the way the seats will come up, and it will seriously disadvantage the party to which I belong.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Tell us how it will.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not think it would be proper for me to recite what I think will be the result of the work of the commissioners. I think it is up to the commissioners to reach their own decision. But it will severely disadvantage us.

What we seek to do by the deletion of paragraph (b) is to set in operation at some stage a form of inquiry whereby a group of independent people could have a look at equality of representation. I do not want to become bogged down in the argument which developed last night about someone having 15 votes to another person's one vote. I am *au fait* with the voting situation. Every person of voting age is entitled to one vote.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is all they get.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: All we ask is that the one vote have one value. I cannot go along with the argument that the adoption of that principle will somehow disadvantage people in the country. I might say I cannot go along with the notion, which seems to have become implanted in the minds of members on both sides, that the adoption of one-vote-one-value—and perhaps someone with a mathematical turn of mind would like to think about that more deeply—would magically result in

the Labor Party being elected to Government. It simply would not do that.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not think there are many things which would bring that about.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Quite honestly, I do not know what to think about it. I do not have a crystal ball. However, a man's thoughts are his own personal property. That is about the only thing he has left.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is until you express them.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Then they are no longer thoughts, but words.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Probably many of them should best remain thoughts.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I just cannot go along with this kind of thinking. Almost every part of the world has at least adopted the democratic principle of equality of votes; and if we wish further representation no matter what the cost then we simply add more members.

While we are talking about the present and the proposed representation, I might touch briefly on what is probably the fairest representation, which is universally rejected by all major political parties. I refer to proportional representation. If one wishes to debate the issue of equality and fairness, it is only natural one should touch upon this matter. Of course, I know the Labor Party is not very happy with proportional representation; and I also know the Liberal Party is not happy with it. However, I happen to know that the Country Party, the DLP, and the Australia Party think a great deal of it.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: We are not very happy about it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Then the Minister is different from some senior Country Party people I have met; they would welcome it with open arms, and I know the DLP is wedded to this principle.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What would the Country Party gain from it? Nothing.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The way the Country Party is going now it would not gain very much. In the not-too-distant future the only thing we will have to remind us of members of the Country Party will be memories. I am amazed to see Country Party members agreeing to this Bill. All I can say is that they must play the thimble and pea trick in Cabinet.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair has nothing to do with thimbles and peas.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: No, Sir; I am just saying that whoever runs the thimble and pea game must be an expert because he is winning; either that or some members of Cabinet are drawing hot marbles out of a hat and the Country Party draws the cold ones.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: To what part of the clause does that refer?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The deletion of paragraph (b). Mr Chairman, I have previously had to give you a word of advice, because on the floor here we have someone who wants to usurp your position and to take over your job.

The CHAIRMAN: When I want advice I will ask for it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am not advising you, Sir, I am saying that sometimes I do not know to whom I should listen!

The CHAIRMAN: Just listen to me.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I certainly am, Sir, and I always do. However, I notice repeatedly that another member tries to chair this place from his seat on the floor.

I think the Chamber should give serious consideration to the amendment, because it calls into question the whole function of this Chamber and comes back to something I said not very long ago. The illusion is created and the myth is spread that this Chamber is a House of Review. I think every fair-minded member would say that is a good story, but it simply is not true. Here we have the chance of exploding the myth once and for all. The Minister for Justice has introduced the Bill, and I would imagine he is duty bound to support it whether it is good or bad; and he is duty bound to reject the amendment whether it is good or bad. Yet at the same time we are telling the public this is a House of Review. Let me pose this question: How can one review one's own legislation?

The Hon. N. McNeill: We do it frequently.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is right, and then members opposite get up and say this is a House of Review. If we were fair dinkum we would have one Minister in this Chamber—if we had to have a Minister at all—and he would be a Minister without portfolio. Many upper Houses in the world which are really Houses of Review work in this way, some of them admittedly are elected by electoral colleges. I think the Canadian Senate is elected for life, and it has a leader who is a Minister without portfolio. All we are doing here is wasting time.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Precisely.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are making your contribution.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: In answer to Mr Baxter, we are paid to waste time. Mr Thompson is wasting his time by moving this amendment.

The Hon. N. McNeill: No he isn't.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am wasting my time by speaking to it. Without taking into account individual members, the public of

Western Australia must pay for this wasting of time an absolute minimum of \$700 000 a year for a House which is supposed to be a House of Review.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are assuming all the time we spend here is wasted, and not just the time you waste.

Sitting suspended from 6.07 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. D. K. DANC: Before the tea suspension I was reflecting on whether or not this is really a Chamber of Review. I had nearly completed my remarks, but as I failed to catch your eye, Mr Chairman, I was cut short. Before resuming my seat I would like to mention there is still one point remaining that intrigues me. It is a matter to which the Leader of the Opposition has been alluding; that is, in all the clauses in the Bill no reasons have been given for no attention having been paid to the seat of Pilbara. At some stage I would like the Leader of the House to let us know why that was not done.

I am fully aware that unless we can delete these words which are the subject of the amendment, we cannot go on to discuss what the effect of their deletion will be. I want to emphasise that in putting forward a case to have this amendment agreed to, I am still of the opinion that more attention could have been given to at least making a start along the road towards the implementation of one-vote-one-value, and I am still convinced that if a better appreciation had been made of the whole electorate at least a start could have been made on the implementation of that principle without taking away any of the rights of representation of people in country areas.

A great deal has been said about the difficulty constituents in country provinces have in interviewing their members. I will accept that argument to some extent in regard to people living in the north-west, but from some of the experience I have had I gain the impression that in some country areas the constituents see more of their members than would constituents in metropolitan districts see of their representatives. It would be impossible for Mr Griffiths, Mr Claughton, or myself ever to see a quarter of the electors of our province.

Great play has been made on the disadvantages of members representing country provinces at least in some parts of the State, but I venture to say that their constituents are better served by contact with their political representatives than most constituents in the metropolitan area, or in the more densely populated areas, could ever hope to be. I commend the amendment to the Committee and hope that members will vote for it.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: The Bill before us seeks to amend the Electoral Districts Act which contains several important principles. One of those principles is that,

as far as Western Australia is concerned, it is divided, for the purpose of determining the electorates, into three separate divisions.

That principle is supported by members of the Government parties, but obviously it is not supported by members of the Opposition judging from the comments they have made. Mr. Dans has said that this debate is a waste of time. We can sit here all night and talk about all the matters that should or should not be happening, but what we have to bear in mind is that we have an Electoral Districts Act which contains the principle I have just mentioned, and this Bill seeks to retain that principle in the Act. The Bill does not seek to change that fact, but the Opposition believes that it should be changed.

The amendment we are now debating seeks to change that principle which, as I have said, is already in the Act and it is a principle in which we on this side of the Chamber believe.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Parliament is the master of its own destiny. We are here to change and review the laws.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: That is right. I do not blame the Opposition for trying to gain some advantage from what it is trying to achieve, because that is its prerogative.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It would not be any advantage.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I suggest that, obviously, there would be some political electoral advantage in the Opposition endeavouring to create in the minds of the electorate that there was some devious intent in this Bill. If the Opposition wishes to use this measure as it has done with other Bills to create an impression in the electorate generally that the intention of the Government is to perform some devious act to ensure that for all time—

The Hon. R. Thompson: Everyone knows that this Bill is a gerrymander.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: That is the point I am trying to make. Mention has been made of one-vote-one-value, a principle which this Bill does not seek to implement. The party to which I belong, and the Government parties generally, believe in that principle which is contained in the Act at present, and the Government does not seek to change it. One of these days it may be found the time has arrived to change that principle, but the Government currently, does not believe that time has been reached.

By making emotional pleas that the Bill is a gerrymander and by using that word in an endeavour to convey the impression that the Government is trying to commit some diabolical act and trying to do something—

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I am glad to hear you speaking the truth.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I hope I always speak the truth. What the Government seeks is to change a boundary which currently defines the extent of one of the three divisions which I mentioned earlier. Due to the fact that that particular division happens to be the metropolitan area, and due to the growth of the State, it was considered that that boundary should be extended, because areas which were not part of the metropolitan area should be encompassed by those boundaries.

In trying to achieve that the Bill seeks to move that line. If anyone could seriously believe the Government could gerrymander 51 seats by shifting that line into the position of the black line depicted on the map hanging on the wall of this Chamber—and in relation to the red line, which is the existing one—then all I can say is that such person has an extremely vivid imagination, because that is the only line the Government can draw, or has any intention of drawing.

The Opposition has already said the electoral commissioners are beyond reproach in the exercise of their duties, and they are the people who will draw the boundaries to determine 51 of the proposed 55 Legislative Assembly seats. How they can possibly draw that line and create a gerrymander to the extent that the present Government will never be defeated absolutely escapes me.

Obviously, the Opposition, in attempting to do what it considers is its duty to do; namely, to create in the mind of the electorate that this is a move by the Government which, if agreed to, will mean there will no longer be fair elections held in the State of Western Australia—

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: There never has been.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: In replying to Miss Elliott's interjection, I point out that from 1971 to 1974 a Labor Government was in office in this State. Are we to assume that that happened as a result of unfair elections? Of course it did not. It came about because the people made that determination at the particular time. The people certainly desired to have a change in 1974, and overwhelmingly they swept the Labor Party from office in this State.

The amendment purports to change a very important principle contained in the parent Act. The Bill does not purport to do that, therefore the amendment before us is a complete contradiction of the proposal contained in the Bill. For that reason the amendment cannot be supported by members on this side.

The opportunity is being taken by the Opposition to make all sorts of claims to suit itself. I do not deny the Opposition the use of any vehicle that is available to it in its effort to get back to office. Members opposite should not use this as an

opportunity to talk about gerrymanders and about people not having equal opportunities to elect members of Parliament, and to create an atmosphere that there is a diabolical Government which seeks to ensure that the Labor Party will not govern in this State.

The drawing of the new metropolitan boundary will not influence the Boundaries Commission when it draws up the boundaries for the 51 electoral districts. Members of the Opposition can scream as much as they like, and they can use all the figures, adjectives, and hysterical terms they can think of, but there is no argument that if the proposed metropolitan boundary is drawn five miles this way or five miles that way the Boundaries Commission will be influenced. Irrespective of where the line is drawn, it will have very little influence on the ultimate decision of the Boundaries Commission, because the new metropolitan boundary forms only a tiny part of the boundaries of the 51 electoral districts which will have to be redrawn with the passage of the Bill.

We should get down to the facts of life. The Bill does not intend to change the principle which has remained in the Act for years. However, the amendment before us endeavours to alter completely a principle which has been supported by this Government.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am disturbed to note that Mr Clive Griffiths, who believes in democracy, freedom of speech, and the right of the individual, has said there is something wrong in the Opposition propounding a policy which is opposed to the proposal that has been put forward by the Government. If the Liberal Party and the Country Party adopt a policy which is designed to perpetuate their term of office in this State, then we in the Opposition must oppose it. The honourable member said we were wasting time and we should not be moving an amendment in this form.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Mr Dans said we were wasting time.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The honourable member said the Labor Party has one policy, and the Liberal Party and Country Party have another policy in relation to the division of the State into electorates.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is right.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If we in the Opposition think that the proposal of the Government is wrong we should make every effort to correct it. If in so doing we draw attention to anomalies or injustices associated with the Act we would only be doing our job as members of Parliament.

The Hon. T. Knight: If that is the position why did you not do something about your Government presenting a Bill in 1971?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: When this Bill was introduced the President quite

correctly ruled that a division had to be called for because a constitutional majority was required. Members opposite would know that when the Labor Party was in Government in this State from 1971 to 1974 it did not have a constitutional majority in the Assembly, so it would have been futile for us to introduce a Bill in the lower House because such a Bill could not be passed without the support of the Liberal Party or the Country Party.

It amazes me that Mr Clive Griffiths has adopted the attitude he has espoused. There is no doubt about the reason that prompted the Labor Party to move the amendment before us. We have done so in the hope that it will be passed; and if it is passed we will see a great electoral reform in Western Australia; one which will give the people an opportunity to elect to Parliament members who have the power to abolish this Chamber. That is Labor Party policy.

The Leader of the Government in this Chamber said there was something wrong with that, and we were moving the amendment for personal motives. He imputed that we were doing this to get rid of the State Parliament. That is far from our thoughts. What we are trying to do is to get rid of the Legislative Council. The purpose of achieving the principle of one-vote-one-value is to get rid of this Chamber.

Everyone knows that under the present circumstances the boundaries of the electoral provinces have been so drawn as to ensure a Liberal-Country Party majority in this Chamber. Mr Clive Griffiths is pulling faces; how can we achieve anything in this respect when the Government has 21 out of a total of 30 members in this Chamber?

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You can win seats.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The apathetic attitude of members opposite worries me, and they are demonstrating that by their indifference to the amendment before us. The question of how a voter is disadvantaged as a consequence of the amendment has not been answered. If the State is divided equally into 51 electoral districts then there will be about 12 000 electors in each electorate. There is already that number in the Pilbara electorate and in some country electorates.

How a mechanic at Merredin can be disadvantaged electorally as a consequence of living in the country, as compared with a mechanic working at Maylands, is beyond my comprehension. Some members opposite have given the impression that because the mechanic at Merredin does not have a television set he is disadvantaged politically. That was said last night, but I cannot understand the reasoning.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Who said that?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I am not sure, but that has been used as an example to

illustrate that people living in the country are disadvantaged. Other members have said that because we in the Opposition have taken a stand on this question we are being intolerant of the country people. However, I have not seen any evidence of that among the members on this side. Mrs Vaughan pointed out last night that members opposite seemed to have an idea that metropolitan members have a hatred of country people. I say such an attitude has not been advocated by me or any other member on this side.

It has been claimed that the attitude of the people in the rural areas is that they are disadvantaged, because they cannot readily reach their members of Parliament. Just imagine Mr Clive Griffiths being in the Opposition and propounding the views I am propounding!

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the honourable member will deal with the amendment before the Chair.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: How do you think I would go?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The honourable member might do all right with a bit of training! From the attitude of members opposite, who claim their electors cannot get to them readily, it seems that they think they are God-given people and that their constituents gather around them as though they were a Messiah who could wave a wand and do all sorts of things for them. That is not the position at all. It is more the exception than the rule that the member of an electorate would contact his constituents. I support the remarks of Mr Dans who pointed out that he would have more difficulty in contacting some of his constituents than Mr Tozer would have in contacting his constituents.

I do not see how people in the rural provinces are disadvantaged. Why should they be given any advantage in respect of the weighting of votes? That question has not been answered by any member opposite. How are the constituents in country areas disadvantaged electorally? It is claimed that many country constituents do not have motorcars, television sets, and other things; but I say they certainly are not disadvantaged. If they are disadvantaged, then in this day and age there are ways of overcoming that.

The Leader of the Opposition has said that the State should be broken up into 51 Legislative Assembly electorates, so as to give every person in the State proper representation. I believe that is a most democratic move to make. It is not a question of the Labor Party wishing to perpetuate its term of office; in fact, the Labor Party would be putting itself at some risk. We believe there are better means available to elect members of Parliament to this Chamber and the other Chamber, to bring about some electoral reform.

I do not think it is a question of wanting to do away with the State Parliament; that is not in the Labor Party policy at all and it has never been suggested by the Labor Party. The Prime Minister is an individual and perhaps he has different ideas. If I were to say that the State Parliament should be abolished that does not mean that the Australian Labor Party is of the same opinion.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Did not the Prime Minister say that was his intention?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Mr Pratt does not know the policy of the Australian Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party will expound its policy prior to any election, and if part of that policy is to abolish State Parliaments the party will follow that course.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Do you disagree with what the Prime Minister said?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That is not in our policy.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Mr Cooley said that what was stated before an election was acted upon.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Mr Cooley was talking about our policy.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: The idea was put forward by your leader.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If Sir Charles Court says something it does not mean that what he says is in the policy of his party.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: The honourable member is saying that I am ill-informed on what Mr Whitlam said? You are saying that he did not make that statement?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is in the interest of the State. The amendment has not been moved because of self-interest, and its purpose is not to gain control so that there will never be a Government other than a Labor Government in this State. The amendment is not for that purpose. The Government has not been accused of drawing up a boundary so that there will never be another Labor Government.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You have not stopped saying just that.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I do not think that was truly said.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You are giving a pretty good imitation of saying it.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: The amendment will bring about a democratic reform so that when the people of Western Australia give a Government a mandate that mandate will be put into effect in a true and proper manner. I support the amendment.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: Mr Chairman.

Point of Order

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, is Mr Clive Griffiths able to speak again?

The CHAIRMAN: We are now in Committee and he can speak again.

Committee Resumed

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I am sorry to observe that Mr Cooley has not familiarised himself with the Standing Orders of this Chamber during the time he has been here. I assure him that immediately I sit down he will be able to speak again if he so wishes.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It is human to err; I think we all appreciate that.

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS: I have previously made my points with regard to this measure. However, I am forced to defend myself against the accusation made by Mr Cooley that I was endeavouring to stop him, or members of his party, from taking some action. Indeed, I am one of the most tolerant members on this side of the Chamber towards the rights of his party, or anybody else, to move anything which they may wish to move. I thought I made it perfectly clear that I believe implicitly in the right of anyone to move a motion and take any steps he might feel are in order.

The Hon. D. K. Dans said we were wasting the time of the Committee and the time of the people, and I was relating this to the very fundamental principle which is contained in the Electoral Districts Act. That fundamental principle is supported entirely by the Government parties and because the intention of this Bill is not to change that fundamental principle there is no point in pursuing the argument on an amendment which proposes to change that principle. Therefore, Mr Dans was perfectly right; we are wasting time. It was in that context that I was referring to the waste of time.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I did not intend to enter this debate because I felt I had said everything last night. In fact, I feel I am wasting my breath because we know what the outcome of this legislation will be.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: How do you know that?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: The honourable member would have to be joking! Mr Clive Griffiths said he could not understand why we are so upset about the proposed boundary, and why we are suggesting it is a gerrymander.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is not a gerrymander.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I would assert it exacerbates the present situation.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What you mean is that in your opinion it is a malapportionment.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The Electoral Districts Act itself is a gerrymander.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is not. At the worst it would be a malapportionment. It cannot be both; at least use the proper term.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The Minister does not think that "gerrymander" is the proper term.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think the honourable member means "malapportionment". It cannot be a gerrymander.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Thank you for that little lesson.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is time you learnt.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It is time I gave the Minister a lesson.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I am quoting Mr Beazley, almost word for word. He should have taught the honourable member by now.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It is time I gave the Minister a lesson by quoting a unanimous statement by members of the Liberal Party.

The CHAIRMAN: As long as you stick to the amendment.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I would rather you did not.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Mr Clive Griffiths referred to the word "gerrymander" and wondered why we thought the Bill now before us represents a gerrymander.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Because you do not know the meaning of the word.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: If the Minister will be quiet for a while I will tell him something. My understanding of the word is that it is different from malapportionment. As the Minister sought to give me a lesson on the meaning of "gerrymander" I want to refer him to the unanimous decision of the Constitution Review Committee which, among its members, included a number of eminent Liberals. The report which was published in 1959 stated—

One form of gerrymandering is the creation of electoral divisions in which there are substantial disparities in the number of enrolled voters so securing for a political party greater representation than it should have. In all its forms, the device is thoroughly subversive of the democratic process.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They are wrong; that is a malapportionment.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What the honourable member has referred to has absolutely nothing to do with the intention of the Bill now before us.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: What I have referred to is one of the accepted meanings of the term in this day and age.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Of course, you can change the meaning of a word as much as you like.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: We refer to the contents of this Bill as a gerrymander. If the proposed boundary is compared with the statistics gained from the ballot boxes in the electorates of Dale and Kalamunda it will be obvious that it is a Liberal Party set-up.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: But all the other boundaries still have to be drawn up.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: We are aware of that. However, certain electorates will be favoured because of the removal of Labor areas. I do not know how many times it is necessary to explain to members opposite why we feel the contents of the Bill are unjust and unfair. I cannot understand why members opposite cannot grasp that this measure is unjust and undemocratic. A total of 63 per cent of the electors are represented by 45 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, and 33½ per cent of the seats in the Legislative Council.

The proposal now before us will exacerbate the existing position, as well as create a gerrymander. The percentage increase in electors to be added to the metropolitan area is higher than the increase in the number of seats by which it is intended to increase the size of each House.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is an illustration of mathematical gymnastics.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Mr Clive Griffiths also said it was obvious that nothing was wrong with the existing electoral set-up because Labor Governments have been elected to office. Of course they have, but only in the other place. There have been 13 changes of Government in this State, since responsible government, but there has not been one change in the control of this Chamber. Since this Chamber was established in the 19th century it has been in the hands of the conservatives. There is something rotten in the State of Western Australia when this situation can persist for so long. The intention of the Bill we are now discussing is to continue the situation to the advantage of the conservative parties.

I know I am wasting my breath in supporting the amendment but perhaps one day we will see some progress in this State. It takes a long time for conservatives to change their thinking but let us hope the people will eventually convince them that they are wrong.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: One would not have thought that the debate on an amendment of this nature could go on for so long. I rejoin the debate for

the purpose of answering one or two points which have been raised since I made my comment late this afternoon.

It appears to me there must be some sort of division, which we cannot see, stretched down the length of this Chamber because by the time the words expressed on this side of the Chamber reach members on the other side somehow or other those words are twisted and distorted and heard in a completely different way from the way they were expressed.

Nothing was more expressive of that attitude than the interpretation Mr Cooley put on the remarks of Mr Clive Griffiths, who I thought gave a very simple and concise explanation of the purpose of the Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It is always simple.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: He indicated that the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is fundamentally contradictory to the purpose and objective of the Bill, and therefore, we cannot support the amendment.

I would like to make an observation because of the attention given to this problem of communication, political disadvantage, and so on, in country areas. Mr Cooley, as well as other Opposition members, are great students of politics, and I am sure they keep and read not only their literature but also Press cuttings and Press statements. Unless they believe there has been a revolutionary change in communication in the last three years, then what the Leader of the Labor Party (Mr J. T. Tonkin) said at that time is obviously no longer valid. When Mr Tonkin was discussing the electoral loss by the Labor Party in a certain election, and particularly in country areas, he said he believed the swing occurred because country people did not get the message, and there was not the same opportunity for communication of the Labor campaign message.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are not getting our message either.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition will not divert me, because I am sure he recalls his leader's statement. If the Opposition is not prepared to accept the argument we are putting forward here, perhaps they will accept the viewpoint of their leader on that occasion.

The Hon. R. Thompson: In that year, at that time; yes, we would accept it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Things were different then?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Of course they were totally different, and you know they were.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am talking about something that has happened in the last three years. It is no good saying that the situation has changed to that extent in that time.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You were speaking about something that happened in 1954. Tell us what Mr Tonkin said three years ago?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not talking about 1954.

The Hon. R. Thompson: The quote you referred to last night was in 1954.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The fact remains, as Mr Clive Griffiths said, when talking about the metropolitan boundary—

The Hon. R. Thompson: The rigged one, yes.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: The uncertified one.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: This is something the Government is responsible for, and we accept it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It took you a long time to accept it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I said this on the very first occasion I spoke to this Bill.

I now come to the alleged gerrymandering. It is rubbish to call the proposal a gerrymander. Such a term could not be applied at all because there is no suggestion and no opportunity to gerrymander electorates in the area bounded by that line.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But the line should not be there.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Again, as Mr Clive Griffiths said, it will be the task of the commissioners, on the passing of the legislation, to divide up that territory into electoral districts and provinces. I do not know whether any Opposition members know how the commissioners do their work. I do not know, and I happen to be the Minister who is responsible for this legislation. The commissioners hear arguments and make their own assessments. As members opposite know full well, there is no opportunity nor any intention to influence the commissioners in any way.

This leads me on to the remarks of Miss Elliott who said that the Labor Party has never been in control of this Chamber. Do we need to point out the obvious again? Mr Claughton knows what I am speaking of, because he shares a province with a Liberal member. Mr Clive Griffiths and Mrs Vaughan could also speak on this matter because they share provinces as representatives of different political parties.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I do not think I ever will.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Does the Committee need to be reminded of the situation in the North Province? On one occasion two elections were held on the same day, a normal election and an extraordinary election. The result of that election was that the people returned one Liberal member and one Labor member. Mr Dellar and Mr Berry represent the same province,

but they belong to different political parties. What hurts the Labor Party, of course—and we understand this without being cynical or critical—is that in recent years it has lost the representation of the North Province.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is political fortune. I do not think we have to stretch these things out.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: All right, have I made the point?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: No, you have not.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is just impossible to get the message across. The fact is that the situation can change at any time. Governments can change and representation can change.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But we cannot change the electoral Act.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In the circumstances the Labor Party cannot change the electoral Act because the change it wants to make is quite contrary to the principle which Mr Griffiths explained, and which happens to be the principle that we on this side endorse and support. That is the name of the game. We happen to be the Government now, but that is not to say that the Labor Party should not propose certain changes. I will not agree with other speakers who say we are wasting time; far from it because I believe that the role of Opposition is to make its views known as clearly as possible for the electorate at large.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Do you reckon this is a fair Bill?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Of course I reckon it is a fair Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: And you do not think there is any room for improvement?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I believe we have the best legislation possible in these circumstances, otherwise I would not have introduced the Bill.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: That is right.

The Hon. R. Thompson: And you do not think there is any room for improvement?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I have made my statement.

The Hon. R. Thompson: No room for improvement in this Bill?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: There could be, but nothing has been suggested so far.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: We have debated and argued these things on their merit.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You did not give any answer to the debate.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: This depends on whether one bothers to listen or not.

Mr Chairman, you are being very indulgent—

The Hon. R. Thompson: I would say he is, letting you go on.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In any electorate and any province there is an opportunity, and there remains an opportunity, for any political party to win. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that there could be a change in representation of the North Province or the Lower North Province in the next election.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Not in the next election, no.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Whether it will happen is another thing, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: That is right, as it did in 1971.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The electors in any province have the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I thought they voted very sensibly in 1974!

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The decision rests with the people, and I have cited good illustrations to show that the people are discerning and make a conscientious vote. So it is possible for the Labor Party to have the numbers.

I refer again to what Mr Dans said on another occasion; we are not motivated by power over principle and power over people. In fact, I must make the observation that it was a rather strange statement to come from the other side of the Chamber when we know of the exercise of power through organisations associated with the Labor Party.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We know of the exercise of power by organisations associated with the Liberal Party.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: We have been accused of exercising that power over principle and power over people. I believe it is not inappropriate to throw this remark right back to those who expressed it.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Who brought this into the debate? Who introduced it?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I said it just then.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Nobody from our side introduced it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: This was a statement made by Mr Dans, but not during the debate on this amendment.

The Hon. R. Thompson: No.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It was raised for the first time during the debate on the Bill we have before us. I hope the Committee remains of the mind that it should not support the amendment.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We have been debating this clause since 5.00 p.m. and I have repeatedly asked the Minister

for his views on the fairness of the legislation. Of course we heard the speech of Mr Clive Griffiths who claimed that although the Liberal Party agrees with it, it is contrary to its platform. It is totally contrary to the platform of the Liberal Party, and yet its members have introduced it and they believe in it.

Recently I asked the Minister whether he believed there was any room for improvement in the measure, but of course, he would not tell us this. Why do we have such a malapportionment as the electorate of the Pilbara compared with the other three adjoining electorates? The Government has a constitutional majority in this Chamber, and it could have brought electoral justice to all the people.

We would not have argued if the Government had adopted such a course. However, the Minister will not reply and I ask him now to be honest with the Chamber and reply to my query.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I have heard a lot about the lack of female logic but it seems to me that tonight a large majority of Government supporters opposite have been displaying a lack of male logic. As I pointed out last night, the Liberal and Country Parties are standing up for a principle which, in itself, is illogical; namely, the principle of the weighting of votes. The value of one's vote depends on whether one is inside or outside the metropolitan area.

The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is designed to do away with the principle of weighting votes according to area by dividing Western Australia into 51 electorates containing an average of 12 000 voters. A 10 per cent variation either way has been allowed for in our amendment.

I cannot fathom how the Minister for Justice can support the principle of weighting votes according to whether one is inside or outside that iniquitous boundary. But if we are to continue to weight votes according to area, let us be fair dinkum and start to think about the logical extensions of such a principle; let us draw concentric circles radiating from the City of Perth, each succeeding area having a different voting structure from its neighbour; let us include the lack of availability in the country of all these things about which the Minister complains.

The Minister said there seemed to be some sort of invisible barrier across the middle of the Chamber which distorted his message before it reached this side of the Chamber. However, it would seem that some members on this side receive the message loud and clear because their voting pattern does not change.

Two different principles are involved here: One is the just and proper representation of the people according to the best tenets of democracy, and the other is the care of our constituents, so that they may

have access to us and bring matters to our attention. Nobody on this side would deny there are certain disadvantages to living in the country, but I would hope the Government would also concede that there are disadvantages to living in a big city.

Having acknowledged that disadvantages exist in the country, let us see what we can do about them. Mr Cooley suggested the payment of compensation to country members who are disadvantaged by the lack of communication facilities; one would have thought the Minister and his colleagues would have listened to Mr Cooley's suggestions.

Surely we are talking about two different principles in this respect. How can we overcome the problems experienced by constituents who are isolated, and who suffer a lack of transport and communication facilities, and from the increased cost of such facilities? We can provide the country member with extra staff and allowances. Even in the heat of debate, nobody on this side has suggested that people who are disadvantaged should not be compensated; this is the basis of the policy of the Labor Party. We do not deny the position of disadvantaged people.

But what we do deny is the right of the Government to say that some people in this State shall have a vote which is worth more than others, merely because of where they live. Therefore, it is the principle of just representation about which we should be concerned. If I vote in this Chamber on a particular matter, I am voting on behalf of 94 000 people. Yet Mr Dellar votes on behalf of about 6 000 people. If the matter vitally affects city dwellers, it is entirely illogical that Mr Dellar's vote should have a greater value than mine.

The Federal Minister for Education said that there was not a gerrymander in the electorate; rather, it could be described as malapportionment. This malapportionment was written into the Act and specifies that each metropolitan vote will amount to half the vote of that cast in agricultural, mining and pastoral electorates. I concede that that amounts to malapportionment.

When I talk about the gerrymandering aspects of the legislation, I refer to the proposed new boundary of the metropolitan area drawn by the Government, and also to the number of electorates represented in this Parliament. My argument is that the line drawn by the Government will encompass large pockets of Labor voters in electorates which normally support the Labor Party, thus reducing support for the Labor Party in areas immediately adjacent to the new boundary. This could be taken to ridiculous extremes; the line could snake out to Kalgoorlie; it could travel along, bypassing the conservative areas such as Merredin and others and travel along the railway line. It is all possible.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It is not; the boundary commissioners must draw the boundaries.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: It is possible. This legislation is not merely for members sitting in this Chamber; it will become an Act of Parliament and will go on to the Statute book.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee is dealing with the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and the honourable member is getting a long way from it.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: What I am saying is very relevant to my remarks relating to the creation of a gerrymandered area; the legislation will perpetuate the principle of malapportionment, and the metropolitan area is to be gerrymandered by manoeuvring the boundary to safeguard the Government. This is where it becomes a gerrymander. The interpretation of the Minister for Education was quite right; it is an area which includes people of one particular political colour. Members will recall at the last election that the metropolitan vote for the Labor Party actually increased, but the reduced country vote put us out of office.

Having referred to two of the illogical approaches of members opposite to this matter I should like to refer to something which is not as positive but about which the Government might like to think. I referred last night to the situation in the United States where, in 1962, a ruling of the court made it compulsory that every State would have electoral districts embodying the principle of one-vote-one-value.

Despite this decision, which seems to have come too late, the American experience is that since the nineteenth century, the power, influence and use of the State legislatures has gradually but definitely been decreasing in favour of the Federal Government. Political scientists analyse this as being due to the disenchantment of the electorate with the control over the State legislatures exercised by the rural vote. They now look to the Federal Government for electoral justice.

I believe this is what is happening in the States of Australia today. Although the Federal Government is limited in its powers, there is a definite trend for people to consult their Federal member rather than their local State member because they know that by the time any matter reaches the Upper House, the country voter will be the one who decides its ultimate fate. Thus, two-thirds of the electorate—the metropolitan voter—is dictated to by the remaining one-third, the country voter. I am sure many country people who are fair in their approach to democracy would agree with my remarks.

I know what I have to say will be to no avail, but as the Minister for Justice

said, it is our duty to raise these matters. I oppose clause 2 because I feel if it is lost, the whole exercise will be lost.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The passage we are seeking to delete is the one which will alter the number of members in the Legislative Assembly from 51 to 55. If the amendment is carried, an inquiry will be instituted and a redistribution carried out to implement the principle of one-vote-one-value.

I do not wish to be repetitive; I intend to confine my remarks to matters which have not yet been canvassed. However, I must refer to an accusation by the Minister for Justice that there is some sort of invisible barrier across the Chamber which causes his words, and those of his colleagues to be twisted and distorted by the time they reach this side. I well recall a letter which appeared in *The West Australian* which set out what was described as "the slanderers' creed".

In other words, the author of the letter claimed there was a tendency to accuse one's opponents of doing the things one was doing oneself. The letter was signed by the Premier (Sir Charles Court) and, because it was so well set out, we assumed the Premier was extremely familiar with the principle. I believe that was what the Minister for Justice was doing; he was accusing us of doing something which in fact he was doing himself.

His words did not become twisted, it was our words and the words of his own party that have become twisted, because his party went to the electorate on a platform of redistribution based on the equality of numbers of electors which is simply not in the Bill.

The Bill does not propose there shall be the same number of electors in the metropolitan seats as in the mining, pastoral, and agricultural seats, or in the seats of the North-West. So in some way the platform on which the Liberal Party presented itself to the electors has become twisted and changed, until it now says that the principles contained in the legislation is what it espouses—not what we are espousing, and which is almost precisely what the Liberal Party had in its platform.

We ask that this passage be deleted so that the common policies of the parties can be carried into effect. I think it is worth noting that in *The Advertiser* today there is an article which outlines legislation being presented to the South Australian Parliament in which is contained precisely what we are proposing; that is electorates of equal value based on a quota system of 47 Assembly seats and boundaries for these seats to be decided by the Electoral Commission, just as we have—it is to be decided by the Electoral Commissioner, a senior judge, and the Surveyor-General. That is the system we have in this State.

The South Australian legislation is being supported by the more enlightened supporters of the Liberal Party philosophy—that is the Liberal Movement of South Australia—and the proposal is seen to be a fair, reasonable, just, and democratic way of choosing a Government. This should present a lesson to all members of the Liberal and Country Parties in what can be done if they stir themselves out of their comfortable and well-established apathy about democratic ideals about which they talk so glibly but about which they are not inclined to take any action. They hope that because they have managed to deceive the people over the years that they will be able to continue to do so in the future. But times are changing and people are becoming more educated.

Perhaps I should take up the Minister's point of quoting the remarks made by Mr John Tonkin whose complaint was that there was only one newspaper and that the people did not have easy access to all sources of information—particularly in connection with television—that are available to the people in the city.

With the advent of the Australian Labor Government that situation has been rapidly changing and television is spreading widely throughout the State. It would really be people in the most remote areas only who are not able to view television.

I will conclude by making some reference to the effect of the distribution of the 55 members proposed in this significant change that the Minister tells us about, where the numbers in the agricultural areas will be fixed at 24 and those in the city at 27. This will create on present figures a quota of 16 250 electors in the city as against 7 600 for an agricultural seat. Beside that tremendous difference in the number of representatives the agricultural electors are favoured with a 15 per cent variation which will allow 1 000 above or below that figure which could, therefore, be about 6 500 in an agricultural seat, or even up to 8 500.

So the differences are really quite enormous and we believe they cannot be justified on the grounds of remoteness, particularly as this applies to the agricultural electorates.

On Monday I attended with the Minister the opening of the Albany Museum. I went down to Albany, spent some hours at the ceremony, and returned in the same day.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: How did you get down there?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: By car, though I would not like to embarrass my host by explaining any further.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: We cannot all travel in that sort of car.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This simply illustrates the manner and speed

at which it is possible to move around the agricultural electorates. The means of transport and communication have vastly improved and with the proposal contained in the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition it cannot be said at all that the rural voters will be disadvantaged.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: From the disinterest shown by members opposite it seems that the debate on this clause is about to end, but before it does I would like to say that I am pleased the Leader of the House has disagreed with the remarks made by Mr Clive Griffiths that we are wasting our time.

I would also like to take issue with the Leader of the House in connection with his remarks about the misrepresentation or twisting of words, particularly as it concerns his reference to Mr John Tonkin's remarks when he said that he believed the country did not get Labor's message because there is no television in some areas and because the people only had one newspaper to read; one which presented only one point of view favouring the conservatives in this State.

There is a difference between election campaigning and political representation and the communication that takes place as a result of this.

I do not think the Leader of the House did himself credit by referring to Mr Tonkin in that manner.

The Government has missed the point of the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition to this clause, because it has been said frequently in this debate that the Bill is open; that there was an Act to be amended; and we should have thought there would be some reform in respect of the electoral malapportionment that is obvious in this State.

As I have said the Bill is open and the conservative Government should have endeavoured to remove some of this malapportionment by improving the Act, but all it has done is to make the position worse.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It has compounded the felony.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That is probably the right expression. The principle of one-vote-one-value is accepted by most democratic countries. It is also accepted in Australia on the Federal basis and if it is good enough in the Federal sphere it should be good enough for us.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Does Mr Collard think it is a good idea?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That is only one man's opinion, but this principle is the policy of the nation. We cannot say it was introduced by Mr Whitlam because the principle of one-vote-one-value at the Federal level was introduced in 1959, before the Whitlam Government came to office.

Before the debate closes I would like the Government to tell us how people are disadvantaged electorally in the country as compared with their counterparts in the urban areas. I would also like to know that if the Government believes in what it is doing at the present time why has it left the Pilbara electorate with 11 885 electors and the Murchison-Eyre electorate with 2 260 people, particularly when it is within the Government's province to correct the anomaly in the course of amending this Act. I think common courtesy should prompt the Minister to reply to these questions.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not going to be held to be lacking in courtesy. In regard to the first question raised by Mr Cooley about people being politically disadvantaged, I would point out that I have already answered that and commented on it as have other members who have spoken, and I have no intention of taking up further time to get across to members opposite a message they will clearly not accept.

In relation to the Pilbara I would say that had we as a Government, and I as the responsible Minister introduced a Bill which proposed to make changes to electorates or electoral boundaries within that area or any other area a charge of gerrymander could well have been sustained. Had I done this the Opposition would probably have done its best to tear me and the Government limb from limb.

It is the role of the commissioners to make these changes and if the Opposition wants to make a check of this let it refer to the recommendations of the 14th or 15th December, 1961, the words of which are still contained in the legislation, and see what the commissioners said on that date. Rather than have the Opposition going to the trouble of searching out the *Government Gazette* I have one here and I know the words.

They decided then, as they had the opportunity to decide at any other time, whether there ought to be changes to electoral district boundaries. That happens to be the function of electoral commissioners. With reference to the Pilbara and why we have not done something about the Statutory provision for the north-west area, that is another question.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is what I asked you. I asked you that specifically.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Leader of the Opposition probably did ask that sort of question, but what he has more recently continued to talk about and about which he became very testy at the conclusion of his last speech—and Mr Cooley also referred to it—was the Pilbara.

Let me come back to the north-west area. The Government, and I as the Minister, had a look at the situation. I commented on this matter earlier in the

second reading debate and I said that the Government may well have to look at the situation. I do not want to anticipate anything, but I express the opinion that probably when the total population of that province warrants further seats or some other change in boundaries, then there will be the opportunity for change.

At present the Government chooses not to change the southern boundary of that particular area. However, I suggest to the Committee that I could bet my last 10c that if we had changed it the Opposition would have taken us to task once again and said that we were imposing a gerrymander on the electorates of this State by so doing.

We do not expect to have it both ways, but neither can the Opposition.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We do not want it both ways either. We want it one way; that is, equal representation for everyone in Western Australia. The Minister indicated that he is trying to bring about uniformity. However, I have pointed out quite clearly to him that his Government has the constitutional majority and that the statutory provisions of the boundaries could have been altered. If he had done this he would have done away with an absolutely glaring example of malapportionment. By not making the alteration he has gerrymandered that particular electorate.

I leave it at that. I hope the Committee will agree to the deletion of the words so that we can proceed to effect some just electoral reform in Western Australia.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. S. J. Dellar

(Teller)

Noes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gwyer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. T. Knight

(Teller)

Pair

Aye	No
Hon. R. T. Leeson	Hon. R. J. L. Williams

Amendment thus negatived.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We have already spoken a great deal about paragraph (b) in this clause, but I believe that some of the points need emphasising. Members on this side have objected to the provision because it is not considered necessary to have a further four members in the Legislative Assembly as such a provision will throw an extra financial burden on the State at a time when the Government is crying "poverty" and is busy raising charges for services right across the board.

It is also, more seriously, threatening to dismiss employees from the Metropolitan Water Board. Despite this, members on the Government side are defending this proposal with their feet, but certainly not very much with their voices, because we have heard very little from them. In point of fact they see nothing at all wrong in the State being burdened in this way, and it is sad that such a situation should obtain.

It is fortunate in one sense, but unfortunate for the people of Western Australia, that very few members of the public have been here to listen to this debate and to see precisely what happens in this Chamber. There is not the least pretence of any review being carried out on this legislation. No real examination is being made of the principles on which it is based, which is what one would assume to be the role of a House of Review. If any of the new members in particular came into this Chamber with starry eyes, believing the myth espoused in respect of this Chamber, those stars would have been dimmed by this time. Certainly the treatment of this Bill is a good example of the process that does take place.

It is pointless to increase the number of members when the opportunity to rationalise the workload of members has not been taken by adopting a one-vote-one-value philosophy in our electoral laws and by providing better facilities for country members to overcome any disadvantage they may have in respect of distance. I might add that as a city member, very little regard seems to be had for the task I face or the task faced by other members in a similar position. We have large city provinces and we have a tremendous task trying to service such a large population.

I would hope that even at this late stage some of the more thoughtful members on the Government side would examine their position and consider whether they are really doing their duty to their constituents and to the people of the State generally by simply quietly acquiescing to the proposals of the Government. No real case has been presented to indicate that this change is necessary.

The figures I worked out based on the existing provisions would give the metropolitan area 26 members, although, if we had the precise number to be included under the changed metropolitan boundaries, it might be more like 25, as against 22 country members. If it is suggested that we should go along with the Government's proposal simply to increase the number of metropolitan Assembly members, such a suggestion is not justified, because if we followed the existing law the numbers would be increased just the same.

I am not at all confident that that kind of introspection will be undertaken by any members from the Government side. There has been nothing in their responses during the debate to indicate that they are inclined towards those kinds of attitudes.

The further amendment in paragraph (c) which deletes words from paragraph (d) of section 3(1) of the Act simply removes the reference to the 1965 Act. It is a consequential amendment and there is not much I can say about it.

Finally, I indicate my opposition to this clause as it stands in the Bill.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Perry

(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. D. K. Duns

(Teller)

Pair

Aye	No
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson

Clause thus passed.

Clause 3: Section 4 amended—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will not labour the debate. Our attitude is known and we intend to oppose the clause.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This clause amends section 4 of the Act in several ways. It substitutes subparagraph (i) of paragraph (b) with the following new subparagraph (i)—

- (i) the Metropolitan Area as the area described in the Schedule to this Act;

In his speech, the Minister for Justice took the liberty of saying it is the Government's view that it should be a matter for the Parliament to determine the respective total number of Legislative Assembly seats to be provided for each of those areas. I would hope when this legislation is passed—as inevitably it will be, despite the very strong opposition from members of the Labor Party—that members of the Government will not then turn around and say it is something Parliament has decided, thereby including members of the Labor Party.

It has been made quite apparent in the debate in this Chamber and in the Legislative Assembly that this legislation is wholly and solely the child of the Government parties. The Labor Party wants no part of it at all and believes the legislation is against the basic democratic principles which should be the guide to the drawing up of electoral legislation. I am sick and tired of hearing such phrases as "Parliament has decided", which I personally take as a form of abuse. Matters are mentioned as having been passed by Parliament, implying that all political parties gave them support.

When the Liberal Party goes out and defends itself on this legislation, I hope it will make it quite plain to the people that the principles of the legislation are owned only by the Liberal and Country Parties and not by the Labor Party. Our policy is one-vote-one-value, and this is what we believe should be implemented. I hope the Liberal Party will make it plain that we tried very hard tonight to achieve that policy in the legislation, that in fact it has been denied by the Government, and that the Government has refuted the platform on which it went to the people.

We could call this Bill the "Liberal Party Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill" because it sets out principles espoused by the Liberal Party; the changes to be made are changes to principles previously written into the legislation by the Liberal Party, and it would be dishonest to claim that the Labor Party supported what the Government has been doing.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Who has done that?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is done time after time. To give an example—I know it is not relevant to the question before the Chamber but I am answering the interjection—a motion was forced through this Chamber to withdraw this State from the Australian Constitutional Convention. The Premier spoke on one of the radio programmes saying this withdrawal had been decided by Parliament. He could have more honestly said the matter was decided by the Liberal Party and was strongly opposed by the Labor Party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member should not reflect on a member in another place, and I think he should stick to clause 3.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I believe that is a very good principle, and it is unfortunate that the precedent had not been set previously in this Chamber when members of the other Chamber and of other Parliaments were criticised. However, as I said, that was aside from the particular point that is being considered by the Committee.

The metropolitan area described in the schedule is that which is also drawn on the map displayed in the Chamber. If we followed the principles laid down for the commissioners in the Electoral Districts Act—that they should take account of communications, natural features, community of interests, and so on—a very different line would be drawn. It is on this basis that we say it is a gerrymander, simply because it does not take those principles into account. In fact, it leaves out of the metropolitan area for the purposes of this legislation, sections of development along the Darling Range and in Serpentine, Jarrahdale, Rockingham, and other places of that nature. If the principle adopted was that the boundaries had to be expanded to take into account the

growth of the metropolitan region, it fell down in that respect. I accuse the Government of doing that quite deliberately for its own purposes.

I think it is also worth pointing out that in fact all those electors within the metropolitan area have one-vote-one-value in respect of each other, and that all those electors in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area have one-vote-one-value; that is not denied. The boundaries in each of those separate electoral districts are, I believe, drawn up quite impartially by the electoral commissioners. No slight is being cast on them by members of my party. I assume that when they drew up the boundaries of the metropolitan area for the 1968 election they did so fairly under the terms of the Act which those commissioners are bound to follow. There is no question at all that justice prevailed. That is not the kind of thing we have been criticising, as the Minister and the Hon. Clive Griffiths are well aware.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What is the kind of thing you have been criticising?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If that barrier has been there, we hope it has fallen at this stage and that members opposite—

The Hon. N. McNeill: It is difficult to tell the difference, actually.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —will be able to follow the explanation I have given. The agricultural, mining, and pastoral districts are weighted compared with the metropolitan area. That is where the gerrymander occurs: in the difference in voting values between the metropolitan area and the rest of the State. We are not talking about any gerrymander within the metropolitan area, or within any of the other districts.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You have been saying that this Bill creates a gerrymander, but now you are saying all the Bill does it to continue an existing gerrymander.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am glad Mr Griffiths appreciates that point.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is different from what you have been saying. It has no more value, but it is different.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: At least we have progressed to the point where Mr Griffiths can understand that a gerrymander exists.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I did not say that; I said I can understand what you said.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am glad that at least Mr Griffiths understands that point. We could perhaps say that a gerrymander is being recreated by this Bill. No firm statement has been made regarding who said where the line should be. The Minister for Justice said that he accepts the responsibility for it and that he

directed officers to draw the line, but he did not say who gave the directions in the first place.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What difference does it make?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It certainly was not the departmental officers who decided where the line should be drawn, was it Mr McNeill?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You started by saying it was not the officers, and then you asked whether it was. Make up your mind.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Through you, Mr Chairman, I would like to have the Minister's confirmation that that is the situation. I ask the Minister: Was it the officers who decided where the line would go?

The Hon. N. McNeill: I function in a responsible Government which has collective responsibility of Cabinet; and that includes all Government departments and Ministers. Under no circumstances do we place the responsibility for decisions on officers.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am pleased to hear that statement. All members would be aware of the fiasco that occurred in another Upper House in Australia in which Government officers were exposed to a situation to which they should not have been exposed.

I accept the attitude the Minister has adopted; and having got that far with him perhaps he would answer another question. Did the Minister himself decide on the boundaries set out on the map and described in the Bill?

The Hon. N. McNeill: The Government decided.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I assume the Minister is talking about Cabinet. Does that mean all Cabinet Ministers—

The Hon. N. McNeill: They took part in the decision? Yes.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: —made suggestions about where the line should be drawn?

The Hon. N. McNeill: Don't be ridiculous.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I believe that is a reasonable question to ask. Members of Parliament are entitled to know how this came about.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Would you also like me to tell you exactly what those Ministers said in relation to every item that has come before them in respect of this or any other Bill?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: No, I am only asking in respect of this Bill.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Well, you won't get an answer.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If I receive no answer the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the Minister and the Government have something to hide.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It was a unanimous decision to make safe seats for Nanovich, Thompson, and Rushton.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I will say this: It was not done by the person who was vilified in the Press this morning in that disgraceful exercise.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We do not claim any responsibility for what the Press says.

The Hon. N. McNeill: It wasn't said for the purposes of the Press?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: If the Minister reads this morning's paper he will find that very little of the substance presented from this side of the House was reported.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Only because nothing of substance was said. How do you print something about nothing?

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: By listening to you.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A few of the remarks made by Mr Thompson were reported, but that was all the Press managed to find space for after roughly five hours of debate. I think that is unfortunate, because we all like to see ourselves acknowledged now and then.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I guarantee you will not receive any more coverage for tonight's effort.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Is that why you talk so much?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not regard it as an achievement to be reported by the Press; I would die of frustration if I did. Perhaps Mr Withers may tell us how he goes about it; perhaps he will tell us whether he gave a fair summation of the remarks made by members on this side when he was talking to the Press.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: The Leader of the Opposition can't complain about the way they have treated him over the years. One would think he has shares in the Press.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I find the interjections interesting and illuminating.

The Hon. N. McNeill: They are doing a world of good for your speech.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am sure they are made for the purpose of distracting attention from the question I asked. Obviously the Government has a secret it wishes to hide and no matter how much we probe we will not receive an answer, nor will the public be given the courtesy of an answer.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: We are trying to get some attention to you so that you will get some Press coverage.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The gerrymander is still there, and although a few minor amendments are proposed to the line I do not think they are of great

consequence. The amendments still continue to ignore the natural boundaries and the natural community of interest which I think is an important factor in metropolitan electorates.

When the total metropolitan area is divided into provinces we will still have provinces composed of five Assembly electorates, and we will still have tens of thousands of people whom we will attempt to service. We will still face an impossible task. How does a member in one year manage to visit all the organisations and community groups which are entitled to have their member visit them? Apart from that, all members will be aware of the strain placed on their wives and families. It is a lucky member who has a tolerant wife and well behaved children who enable him to carry out his duties without complaining too greatly.

We oppose this legislation. No justice at all is being done. The Assembly members will still have 16 000 to 17 000 electors and country electorates, with their 15 per cent tolerance, will still be able to have as few as 6 500 electors. I would suggest that is not creating the situation the Government pretends it is creating; which is to make the electoral distribution and representation more fair. When it makes that sort of statement it is being dishonest to its members and to the public. I strongly oppose the clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—15

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry
Hon. M. McAleer	(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. D. K. Dans

(Teller)

Pair

Aye	No
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4: Section 5 repealed—

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: In normal circumstances the Opposition would like to see the provision contained in section 5 repealed, but taking into consideration the clauses that will follow I wish to identify myself with Mr Cloughton in saying that we do not want any part of this clause.

As we previously indicated, the provision contained in section 5 represents malapportionment of seats and is something which we oppose. However, in seeking to repeal that section the Government is only gilding the lily because we find that in subsequent clauses the situation will become worse than it is under the existing legislation.

In my second reading speech I pointed out that in some instances there is a 15 per cent tolerance one way or the other that will increase or decrease the numbers of electors in certain seats, and so the vote in some rural electorates could be three times greater than the value of the vote in some metropolitan electorates. Therefore we oppose the clause as the repeal of the section would do nothing whatsoever to improve the Act and would, in fact, worsen it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Section 5 which the Government seeks to repeal lays down the method of obtaining quotas for seats under the present Act.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Cooley has just told us that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I listened carefully to what Mr Cooley said and he did not describe the existing section.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You should growl at him and not at us.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am just gently chiding the Minister for saying something that is not so. The existing section at least has the virtue of taking people into account. That section is preferable to the proposal we have before us which gives importance to area alone and not to people. If this section were retained in the Act there would be a greater possibility of some fairness being maintained. If the proposal in the amendment is passed it matters little how greatly the population increases in the metropolitan area as defined, and the relativities in relation to the rural areas will not improve.

The historical trend has been that the number of people in rural districts declines and the number of people in the cities and in some provincial towns increases. Not only is this provision flying off at the worst democratic tangent in that it will no longer take account of people, but also it will further exacerbate a bad position. When we adopt this legislation we will find that over the years there will be increased numbers in the metropolitan seats that will rise over the 20 000 mark and the seats in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area will probably decline below the 6 000 mark. So instead of there being a possible differential of three to one under this proposal at present, after allowing for the percentage differences, that differential will worsen still more.

We can find a great deal to complain about in this legislation. The Government has not been honest with the public in letting them know what the likely consequences of this proposal will be. If we take the Government at its face value and look at the numbers proposed—that is, 27 members to represent the metropolitan area, and 24 to represent the agricultural, mining and pastoral area—one assumes that the Government believes this is a reasonable ratio between the two defined areas. Perhaps Mr McNeill would like to

reply, by interjection, and state whether the Government does believe that this is a reasonable ratio.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I think the Bill and the provision are both reasonable.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Very well. At least we have the Minister admitting this ratio is reasonable. I will not argue with him, but I thought that our proposition of one-vote-one-value was reasonable. However we have gone past that now and we have to accept the proposition that is before us. I hope the Minister will keep to his opinion. I oppose the clause but I will refer to the principle again shortly.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—15

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry
Hon. M. McAleer	(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. D. K. Dans
	(Teller)

Pair

Aye

No

Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
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Clause thus passed.

Clause 5: Section 6 repealed and re-enacted—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This clause seeks to divide the metropolitan area and the agricultural, mining and pastoral area into districts. Actually, it is a change from the provision contained in section 5 of the principal Act. However I would be a hypocrite if I said that I support the clause, because we just do not support this type of legislation. I oppose the clause.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Clause 5 seeks to repeal and re-enact section 6 of the principal Act. Unfortunately, I made my notation alongside the wrong clause and with your forbearance, Mr Chairman, I ask the Minister in charge of the Bill whether the definition of "elector" which has been removed by the deletion of the previous clause, is to be reincluded.

The Hon. N. McNeill: By way of interjection, I advise that I cannot answer the query off the cuff. I will have it checked and come back with the information later.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—15

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry
Hon. M. McAleer	(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Lyla Elliott
	(Teller)

Pair

Aye

No

Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
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Clause thus passed.

Clause 6: Section 7 amended—

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I wish the Hon. A. A. Lewis were here because he had some rather harsh words to say last night in respect of people living in the city area as distinct from those living in country areas. Clause 6 reads as follows—

6. The first proviso to subsection (1) of section 7 of the principal Act is amended by adding after the words "more or less" the passage "in the case of the division of the Metropolitan Area into electoral districts or to a greater extent than fifteen per centum more or less in the case of the division of the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area into electoral districts".

To justify this amendment the Minister said that the principal reason for allowing a greater tolerance in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, is that particularly in the more remote parts of the State it is difficult to give proper regard to other criteria, such as community of interest, means of communication, distance from the capital, and physical features if the numerical allowance is limited to 10 per cent. It is hard to reconcile that statement. While the Minister, and some members of the Government have endeavoured to explain the situation to us regarding the malapportionment, we are not satisfied. However, at least something was said.

The Minister's comment that we should look at the Bill, and not be hasty in condemning it, worries me tremendously. He said the State has a vast area and a small population. Well, Australia is a vast country with a small population, generally. However, federally we do not see fit to have malapportionment. The Minister went on to say that the tremendous wealth of the State is produced away from the metropolitan area and those people involved are entitled to be represented in the manner of giving them a three to one preference over city dwellers.

Whilst considerable wealth may be produced away from the city, in some remote areas, that does not apply to all country areas. However, the 15 per cent will apply to all rural areas outside the line drawn on the map, whether it be near the city in Rockingham or Dale, or in Kalgoorlie. It worries me to think that those who produce tremendous wealth should have a greater voting power than those living in the city. That baffles me. Does that mean that workers in a factory in Bassendean producing more than workers in a factory

in Cockburn should have a greater voting power than those working in a factory at Cockburn?

People such as Mr Lewis ask where this country would be if it were not for the rural people, and the things they produce. However, I ask members opposite who represent country areas how those people could produce the wealth if it were not for the people producing the implements and the machinery in the metropolitan area. I do not make that statement in a derogatory way and I do not want to be misinterpreted and thought to be antagonistic towards country people. The people in the rural areas and in the north-west who produce the wealth would not produce anything at all if it were not for the efforts of the people in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: What about the pioneers?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That is the whole point, and that is why we have mal-apportionment. As has been stated previously, the loading was probably justified in the early days because of the fear of radical people in the metropolitan area. I believe at one time the loading was 40 to one. At least, it is now down to 15 to one.

I take issue with anybody who claims that the wealth of this country could be produced in the rural areas without the efforts of the people in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: They work a lot harder in the rural areas.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If we were to adopt that theory the person digging up the roads would receive a greater salary than does the Prime Minister of Australia. However, things do not work that way, one is rewarded on merit and on responsibility. However, it is beyond my understanding that people should receive some preference simply because they produce a large proportion of the wealth of the country.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They produce one-ninth of the gross national product.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is grossly unfair for the Government to introduce an amendment to increase the tolerance from 10 per cent to 15 per cent. Of course, there has to be a tolerance otherwise there would be changes every day, particularly under our proposal of one-one-one-value. If we were to divide the State into 51 seats we would have to allow for some tolerance because of changing circumstances. However, I cannot see why there should be a preference in respect of country people and I would like the Minister to give us some explanation.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I endeavour to co-operate. Mr Cooley, in his comments, answered one of the questions he raised; that is, the necessity for a discretion to be available with respect to country areas when compared with the metropolitan

area for the reason, as he stated, that if a discretion is not allowed for there would be a continuing need for more frequent redistributions. That is one explanation, and it is purely practicable.

The second explanation is, of course, a practical one also and it relates to the commissioners. In the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, in particular, there are problems associated with the drawing of boundaries having regard to the provisions of the Act.

The commissioners need to have latitude so that they may draw boundaries with regard for communication amongst other things. As I indicated in my second reading speech this matter was, and had been previously in 1955 if I recall correctly, the subject of a recommendation of the commissioners in order to avoid the difficulty. It may well be claimed that because discretion is wider in relation to rural areas, a particular seat or area will remain in existence for a longer period. It may well be interpreted that we are not bringing about a premature situation of imbalance in those particular seats.

I wish to comment on one other matter Mr Cooley referred to, and that is the words used in the second reading speech about the wealth of the State. I make the point that those words should not be read outside the context of the speech notes, because the objectives of the Bill are clear. The 15 per cent discretion is one illustration of this; and the fact that we will do away with the two to one requirement in section 5, and that we are preserving the 24 seats in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area simply to maintain that representation is another. We must have regard for the wealth that is produced in those areas and to ensure that they continue to receive representation. However, we are not saying, and it cannot be interpreted we are saying, that the sole wealth of the State is produced in those areas. We must bear in mind that there will be increased representation in the metropolitan area, and this might be interpreted as a reflection on country districts because they will not get any increase.

So I emphasise there was no intention whatever on my part to say that the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area, or the country areas generally, are the source of all wealth. In my view the source of all wealth is the capacity to produce of the people who live in Australia. This is where the real wealth comes from. Far from drawing comparisons with people in different places, I believe one section complements the other. There was no suggestion of any divisive intention in the use of the words.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I must admit that those are refreshing words from the Minister for Justice. I had intended to rise to my feet because I believe

the people in my electorate would feel it was necessary for me to defend them from remarks such as those we heard from Mr Lewis last night. His remarks were a denigration of people who live in the city.

A tremendous wealth is produced in my electorate. Many construction workers live there, for example, and they contribute to the housing industry—one of the most important industries in this State and in Australia as a whole. We also have many nurses, teachers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, lecturers, and other people who contribute a vast amount to the productive wealth of this country. Even the shop assistants would feel offended if they were told their work was not productive, and because they were only humble shop assistants that their vote would be devalued. So I rose to my feet to defend the people I represent as they did not deserve the denigration they received from some members in this Chamber in the suggestion that their labours are not productive.

Very often workers in the metropolitan area work extremely long hours for very small returns and they deserve recognition. However, I will not labour the point.

I do not believe the reasons given by the Government justify the change proposed in this particular case. If the Minister cares to look at the statistics for the various electorates as provided in an answer given in another place on the 12th August—and which I presume were up to date at that time—he will see that the only seats seriously out of balance are those in the close metropolitan areas. The seat with the greatest imbalance is Toodyay and we know that this problem will be solved with the northern extension of the metropolitan boundary.

Three other electorates show a gross imbalance. The first is Rockingham which has been ignored by the Liberal Party in its extension. The electorate of Kalamunda has also been ignored, but a small portion of the electorate of Dale has been transferred from the rural area. There are the only three seats where we can say that experience since the last boundary change in 1968 has demonstrated the need for a redistribution. The other agricultural seats are mainly within the tolerance that exists in the present legislation.

The Minister has not proved his point; he has merely highlighted the inconsistencies about the drawing up of the metropolitan boundary line. If the Government insists on such a change, then let us do it wholeheartedly and not in this gerrymandering way. We see that Armadale is split down the middle and one side of the railway line is on the wrong side of the tracks as far as one's value as a voter is concerned. The proposition we have before us is totally unjustified, and like the

other provisions in the Bill, it needs to be opposed strenuously.

The seats most seriously out of balance now are near metropolitan ones. If the Liberal Party Government displays any sort of logic, it will include the seats within the metropolitan area. However, there is no justification for increasing the tolerance in the rest of the rural seats, unless it is the intention of the Government to use this adjustment of 1 000 either way of the quota to grant favours to some of its members.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I thank the Minister for his explanation of the words in the second reading speech. It is good to know that there is no thought in the Government's mind of a distinction between country and city people in the development of this country. However, I am still quite genuinely worried that we have a situation where we will reduce the number of electors in the country areas, and there is no doubt that the number of people in the country areas we are talking about will become fewer. They have the same number of seats, and therefore the quotas will be smaller. Previously we had a 10 per cent tolerance, but now there will be a 15 per cent tolerance. With an earlier provision in the Bill, the Government has removed the reference to two to one voting, and that is a good move. However, I fear that giving this 15 per cent tolerance in country areas will only worsen the situation. I am sure I have said this before in the course of the debate.

I wonder whether the Minister is prepared to look at this situation and to ask his advisers whether the malapportionment under this new legislation will be worse than it was under the old. Tonight we heard Mr MacKinnon say that there is malapportionment in the present Act. We all understand that, but I am sure no-one wants to make it any worse.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I think he was really saying that the correct word should have been "malapportionment" and not "gerrymandering".

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Most of us who are realistic about the whole matter consider that there is malapportionment in the electoral boundaries in the State. I ask the Minister whether it is possible to adjourn the proceedings at this time to see whether the malapportionment will be worsened as a consequence of giving country electorates a 15 per cent tolerance. It would be a good gesture on the part of the Government to take this course. I do not think we could reach the situation where we could support such an amendment, but at least we would like to know the facts.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Of course the answer is "No"; I am not prepared to report progress at this stage. This measure

has been subjected to thorough examination in both Houses of Parliament, and once again, because of its importance, it has been closely scrutinised by the Government. I am of the opinion that the provision contained in this clause will lead to complete satisfaction. I would not be prepared to accept or to act upon the request that Mr Cooley makes to me. Under no circumstances can I see that the situation will be in any way worsened—using Mr Cooley's word—by this provision. It was included for the purpose which I have already explained. It will assist in the physical and practical application of the drawing of boundaries. As I indicated, it will avoid the situation of these electorates becoming out of balance too soon.

Mr Claughton made particular reference to the inner metropolitan area and to those electorates which are grossly out of balance. I think he could have referred also to the seats which are out of balance on the low side, and that is why I interjected to the effect that he should have a look at Kalgoorlie, although there may be other seats to which this applies. It is not in the interests of such areas to be subjected to frequent changes or continual absorption and rearrangement with other electoral districts. I repeat that I believe this legislation will improve the situation rather than worsen it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: For the information of the Minister, the electorate of Kalgoorlie has increased in number since the last election; it has roughly 200 more on the roll now. If we examine those electorates which have rolls on the high side and those which are on the low side, we find there is no real justification for increasing the tolerance to 15 per cent; the figures simply do not justify such a change. The electorate of Mt. Marshall is one of the least populous electorates, with only 6938 electors on the roll, and there might be a case for some small adjustment there; however, that is only one seat.

As I said, the other seats can be taken care of by a sensible adjustment to the metropolitan boundary. I am not saying that is what we want the Government to do; we want the Government to remove it altogether. But if we are going to have this boundary, for heaven's sake let us draw it in a sensible way.

The other point is that the Act lays down that in drawing the boundaries the commissioners will have regard to the existing boundaries, and will stick to them as far as practicable. So, there is not likely to be much of a change in the boundaries of rural seats. I interjected on Mr Masters when he was speaking about the numbers he would lose in his seat from the Shire of Wanneroo, which comprises almost 50 per cent of his total number of electors.

In a metropolitan seat in that sort of situation the member is faced with having to make a choice about where he is to go because under this re-arrangement, all metropolitan seats will be drastically changed. However, country members like Mr Masters do not face those possibilities; their seats will remain substantially as they are because this is laid down in the legislation. I feel quite happy that Mr Masters is in such a fortunate position. Certainly, I am not in such a position because the major change in my electorate is to the north; it already contains five Assembly districts and certainly could not be increased to include a sixth district. So, my boundaries must change substantially.

Despite what the Minister has said in his efforts to justify what the Government has done, and in making excuses for the legislation, none of the reasons he put forward stand up to even the most superficial examination. I oppose the clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—15

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Perry
Hon. M. McAleer	(Teller)

Noes—8

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Lyla Elliott
	(Teller)

Pair

Aye	No
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson

Clause thus passed.

Clause 7: Section 9 repealed and re-enacted—

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This clause deals with electoral provinces. Earlier, the Minister agreed with me that the Government believed the Bill contained a reasonable ratio of distribution of seats as between the agricultural and metropolitan areas; namely, a ratio of 24:27. Yet when we come to the Legislative Council, we find that sort of balance no longer exists, and for that reason I propose to move an amendment to this clause to bring about the same sort of ratio between the electoral districts represented in this Chamber as will apply to the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill provides for a sixth Legislative Council electorate for the metropolitan area and, in addition, there are to be eight Legislative Council electorates in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral districts; however, that reverses the ratio of 24:27 which the Government considers is reasonable for the Legislative Assembly. I am afraid the Government's logic in

arriving at this conclusion eludes me; perhaps it was just that the Government had not considered it in this light.

I ask the Government to give consideration to the proposal I am putting before it. I propose that all Legislative Council provinces should be composed of four electoral districts. Of course, that would not be entirely possible in the metropolitan area, since there are to be 27 Assembly districts.

If this amendment were agreed to there would be six provinces containing four Assembly electorates and one province containing three Assembly electorates. I believe this is a reasonable approach to the problem. It would have the further advantage that the Government would not find it necessary to increase the number of provinces of the Legislative Council to 16; the number of provinces would remain at 15; that is, there would be seven provinces in the metropolitan area; six in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, and two in the north-west area, making a total of 15.

I could put forward an alternative proposal which the Government may consider to be more fair if we accept that, because of distance or some other factor, provinces in the agricultural areas should remain the size they are at present, containing three Assembly electorates. If that proposal were adopted it would be necessary to increase the total number of seats to 19. We consider that an increase in the number of members of Parliament at this time is not justified, but obviously the Government does not share that view. I put this proposal to the Minister because I believe it is worth consideration. If he does not care to accept it in this form he may agree with the other proposal; that is, that all the other metropolitan provinces should be made up of three Assembly electorates. He may consider that to be a more satisfactory situation.

When we look at the number of electors involved, taking 7500 as an average for an agricultural seat, that would make a total of 30 000 electors in four Assembly electorates, and if 17 000 were adopted as the average figure for the metropolitan area that would make a total of roughly 50 000 electors. So we would still have a large differential of people between the two electoral areas laid down in the legislation; that is, 30 000 electors in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, as against an average of 50 000 in the metropolitan area.

I believe the Minister is genuine when he says the Government's proposal in respect of Assembly seats is reasonable. If he genuinely believes that I think he should accept that my proposal is a reasonable corollary that would follow it. If this were not done not only would we have metropolitan Legislative Council

members disadvantaged by the 2:1 ratio, or even perhaps a 4:1 ratio in the number of electors compared to the ratio in agricultural areas, but that situation would be compounded again by requiring a metropolitan Legislative Council member to have four Assembly electorates or, as in the case of my province, five Assembly electorates, within a province. So the margin is far in excess of anything that can be reasonably justified. I think the Minister should support this proposition.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not prepared to support the proposition put forward by Mr Claughton. I can do no more than repeat the words I have expressed previously; that is, the Government gave a great deal of consideration to the alternatives that may have been available to it. Bearing in mind that if one continues to preserve, firstly, the principle of fixing the metropolitan boundary for Assembly seats—which has been the subject of much adverse criticism by the Opposition—it would appear that Mr Claughton's suggestion would be incompatible with that.

Where it can be done, I would agree with the principle of keeping down the number of electors in the provinces to a figure that would be regarded as reasonable. We endorsed that principle in our intention to increase the number of metropolitan provinces by one to try to bring about a reduction in those numbers. It may well be that there will be a reduction of numbers, represented by any particular member. I will go no further at this stage, and in the circumstances I am not prepared to give any support to the proposal put forward by Mr Claughton. I merely say that inasmuch as this is a matter that rests with Parliament, it will be a subject of some further consideration—if there are any changes in the future—to ascertain whether there is any necessity to apply the proposal explained by Mr Claughton this evening. However at the moment I give no support to his proposition.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I explained earlier that under the proposals in the Bill 30 000 electors are to be taken from the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area and placed in the metropolitan area. However, there will be the same number of Legislative Council members in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area. This means 30 000 electors, which is just about the number to make up two electoral provinces in the country, will be brought into the metropolitan area. It is proposed to create four new metropolitan seats to bring about some equalisation in metropolitan electorates. However, it is proposed to bring in only two more Legislative Council members. The country areas will be left with the same Legislative Council representation as they now have, but there will be fewer electors there.

It cannot be contended that there is need for more than 15 provinces to be represented by 30 members. Why should the State spend another \$60 000 to \$100 000 per year to obtain the same result? For those reasons I oppose the clause.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Everything that has been said in this debate shows how hollow is the claim of the Government. The Government is not prepared to adopt anything that is the least bit equitable. It has stated that in introducing this legislation it desires to make the position more equitable electorally by increasing the representation in the metropolitan area.

However, when the Government is given an opportunity to demonstrate what its proposal is all about it refuses to do so. The Government wishes to give the impression that it is putting up a reasonable proposition in fixing the country representation at 24 members and the metropolitan representation at 27 members. The Minister has admitted that he believes this to be a fair and reasonable proposal; but when it comes to the members of the Legislative Council he is not prepared to do the same. He thinks it is fair to do that in the case of the Assembly but not in the case of the Council.

Members like myself will have to continue representing provinces with 80 000 electors or more. If the quota for an electoral district is fixed at 16 000, then when five electoral districts are embraced in a province, that represents a total of 80 000 electors—and in fact, a far greater number of people, because there are more than electors living in an area.

The Bill provides there shall be six metropolitan provinces with three embracing five electoral districts and three embracing four electoral districts. I repeat that five electoral districts represent 80 000 electors, whereas in the case of a rural province comprising three electoral districts the number of electors would be about 30 000. That represents a difference of about 50 000 electors.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are presenting your story in a new way. You are shouting a lot!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is surprising that members of the Liberal Party think the strength of a person's voice bears out the strength of his argument. In this instance I have aroused their attention, but nothing seems to arouse their sensitivity. Obviously the Minister is not sensitive to what is fair and reasonable for metropolitan electors.

What a lot of hypocritical nonsense has been presented by members opposite in this debate, and what a lot of deceptive words have been spewed out by members of the Liberal Party and the Country Party! It seems that redistribution is the

last thing this Government wants. It seeks to retain what it has held in its grasp for the last 80 years; that is, political control in this State to be firmly entrenched in its majority in this Chamber.

I think it is quite shameful there has been very little response from the Liberal and Country Party members to justify what they are doing. We have heard the Minister offering explanations which on even the most superficial examination cannot stand up. Here we have the Government being presented with a real opportunity to carry out what it claims it wants to do. Even at this stage the Government is not prepared to say, "There might be something in what the Opposition has put forward. We will give it further consideration."

What the Government has done so far is to work on the quotas laid down in the Act and say, "We either have very high quotas for the Assembly seats under the existing quota system or we have to increase the number of seats in the metropolitan area. We do not want to give away any advantage we hold in the country. Here we have four or five extra Assembly seats in the metropolitan area. What will we do now?"

The Government further says, "We cannot put six Assembly seats in a province. We have found ourselves in an embarrassing position and must do something about the number of seats in the Legislative Council." Instead of doing something which was at least partly fair and following the system that is at present in the Act and allowing the commissioner to fix the quotas and to adjust the seats, the Government has fixed the boundaries and, by way of largess, has thrown in one more metropolitan province seat. It does not change anything for us. We still have the gerrymander which is in the Government's favour.

That is what we are facing tonight and I think that the Government now, more than at any other stage during the debate, stands condemned as a result of the Minister's response to my proposal. I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 7—Delete the word "sixteen" and substitute the word "fifteen".

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—7	
Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. D. K. Dans
Hon. Lyla Elliott	(Teller)
Noes—16	
Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry
	(Teller)

Ayes	Pairs	Noes
Hon. R. T. Leeson		Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. Grace Vaughan		Hon. T. O. Perry

Amendment thus negatived.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: This clause provides that there shall be eight electoral provinces each of which shall consist, as far as possible, of three complete and contiguous electoral districts contained in that area. I cannot see how it could do anything but consist of three complete and contiguous electoral districts. Perhaps the Minister will tell me whether the words "as far as possible" have been included for a reason which is not apparent on the surface.

Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) provides that those districts shall contain approximately the same area as is contained at present. Taking those two provisions together, I consider that the first subparagraph is rather ambiguous and contains unnecessary words. Would the Minister comment on that point?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I direct the honourable member's attention to the Act itself which contains these very words. Whatever significance they contain in the Act they contain in the Bill. I consider the words must be included or the eight provinces provided would not have to consist of three complete and contiguous districts.

I do not think any further explanation is warranted in the circumstances, and I hope Mr Claughton is satisfied.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I regret I did not make myself clear. The words I was questioning were, "as far as possible". It is understandable that these words should appear in the Act as it exists because there could be an odd number of seats which could not be divided evenly into the necessary number of Council provinces. However, when the seats are fixed at 24 what else could they be except three to each province? That is the point I was questioning. I suggest that if those words were lifted from the existing Act, they were lifted unnecessarily.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Noes—7

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Lyla Elliott
Hon. S. J. Dellar	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Clause thus passed.

Clause 8: Section 10 repealed and re-enacted—

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Noes—7

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Lyla Elliott
Hon. S. J. Dellar	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Clause thus passed.

Clause 9 put and passed.

Clause 10: Schedule added—

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Members will be aware that when the Bill was being debated in another place some observations were made about the boundary, and it was the subject of much apparent acrimony and criticism. In particular, three points were raised on which some assurances were given by the Deputy Premier, acting for and representing me in another place. An assurance was given that in respect of those particular points they would be drawn to my attention, and satisfaction obtained as to whether, in fact, they were included by accident or design.

One matter concerned a street alignment, for which a diversion was made on the boundary along Gngangara Road. A second matter concerned a small deviation of the boundary in the Kalamunda area.

The Hon. R. Thompson: My six strawberry growers are coming back again, are they?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I thought it was to bring it into the old existing boundary, which was the national park. I do not know whether six strawberry growers or anyone else is involved. I am not by any means convinced that was the reason for changing the previous boundary.

The third point was the representation which was made in respect of the inclusion of Garden Island in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area. As Garden Island has now been connected by a causeway to the Rockingham-Safety Bay-Point Peron area, it was more logical to consider Garden Island as part of that territory rather than as part of the metropolitan area.

Those matters having been brought to my attention on my return from overseas, I would like to make the explanation that as far as the alteration on the Gngangara Road is concerned I was aware of it prior to my departure and prior to the

introduction of the Bill, and having explored it, it was my understanding that the line was drawn straight rather than having the hump which appears on the map and which is described in the schedule to the Bill.

As I have mentioned, the Kalamunda area is a very small deviation and there is no real reason why the boundary should not have been on the same site as the previous boundary.

In accordance with the assurances given in another place, there appear on the notice paper a number of amendments to the provisions in clause 10, which contains the schedule. I move an amendment—

Page 6, lines 7 to 14—Delete the passage “north-easterly and again easterly along that centre line to the centre line of a road passing along the northern boundaries of Locations 1585 and 1913; thence easterly, southerly and again easterly along that centre line and onwards to the centre line of Road Number 6937; thence easterly and northerly along that centre line and onwards to the centre line of Gnanara Road; thence generally north-easterly and easterly” and substitute the passage “north easterly, again easterly, again generally north-easterly, again easterly, again generally north-easterly and again easterly”.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There is very little to be said about this amendment. It does not change the position very much but I suppose it will enable the Government to say it has taken notice of what members have said in Parliament. Of course, it would be abusing the truth a great deal if the Government did make that assertion in regard to the minor amendments to this boundary.

The situation is quite unchanged. There is very little rhyme or reason behind the drawing of those lines, and no matter how the Government protests about them I think in this particular instance, more than in any past drawing of boundaries in the metropolitan area for the purposes of this legislation, there will remain very grave suspicion about the motives of the Government and whoever was responsible for originating these particular boundaries.

I do not think the Government has done a service to itself or the people of Western Australia. It has failed to grasp the opportunity to bring in reasonable electoral laws, as has been done in South Australia—electoral laws which are truly democratically based. All the Government has done is perpetuate a system which is unsatisfactory and will continue to give cause for complaint until such time as we can have reasonable legislation introduced.

Like Mr Dans, I would suggest the Government needs to take heed of the fact

that the electorate is no longer as uneducated and gullible as it once was. It receives information far more readily than it did previously and is in a much better position to understand the importance of the information it receives.

My colleagues and I will oppose this clause, as we have opposed all but one of the other clauses, to register our protest as strongly as an Opposition is able, particularly in a Chamber of this nature, which pretends to be a Chamber of Review, but which has demonstrated time after time in the divisions on this Bill that it is nothing more than a party Chamber where Government members are tightly controlled by their party leaders.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Without further explanation, I move an amendment—

Page 6, lines 43 to 48—Delete the passage “centre line of Old York Road; thence generally south-westerly along that centre line and onwards to and along the centre line of the Great Eastern Highway to the prolongation north-westerly of the centre line of Wilkie Road; thence south-easterly to and south-easterly and southerly along that centre line and onwards” and substitute the passage “northern boundary of Class ‘A’ Reserve 25313 (Greenmount National Park); thence westerly and southerly along boundaries of that Reserve to the prolongation easterly of the northern side of Frederic Street; thence westerly along that prolongation”.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The third amendment refers to the exclusion of Garden Island from the metropolitan area and its inclusion into the agricultural, mining, and pastoral area. I move—

Page 7, last line—Delete the words “Garden and Rottnest Islands” and substitute the words “Rottnest Island”.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Before you sit down, could you tell us the number of permanent residents on Garden Island—is it about four or five?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: Yes, but they may be replaced by Navy personnel. I understand the number of residents at the moment is quite inconsequential, and it is completely reasonable with the causeway there that Garden Island should be included with Safety Bay.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Eventually they will disappear.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: There are very few.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Noes—7

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Lyla Elliott
Hon. S. J. Dellar	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Noes

Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Clause, as amended, thus passed.

Title put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. M. McAleer
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Noes—7

Hon. R. F. Claughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. Lyla Elliott
Hon. S. J. Dellar	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes

Noes

Hon. R. J. L. Williams	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. Grace Vaughan

Title thus passed.

Bill reported, with amendments.

BILLS (6): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Inventions Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), read a first time.

2. Constitution Acts Amendment Bill (No. 2).

3. Evidence Act Amendment Bill.

4. District Court of Western Australia Act Amendment Bill.

5. Juries Act Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

6. Health Education Council Act Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health), read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 1st October, 1975

The SPEAKER, (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (32): ON NOTICE

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kalgoorlie and Boulder: Property Valuations

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Treasurer:

- (1) When was the last valuation survey of properties made by the State Taxation Department in the Town of Kalgoorlie and the Shire of Boulder districts?
- (2) When had the previous valuation survey in the above districts taken place?
- (3) Is he aware of the discontent expressed by The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Ratepayers' Association (Inc.) because of steep increases said to be in the range of 200% struck in some instances while some reductions were made in others?
- (4) Would he please explain the method used by his officers in striking a norm and apparent variations from the norm?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Revaluations were made for the local authorities in 1974-75 for 1975-76.
- (2) Revaluations were made in 1968-69 for 1969-70.
- (3) No. The revaluations were made for the local authorities and any appeals would be made to them.
- (4) The rating base is the annual value for municipal purposes and valuations were made as prescribed by section 533 (4) of the Local Government Act, 1960-1975.

2. BEACH EROSION COMMITTEES

Coastal Development

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Works:

Further to question on notice 28, asked on 22/4/75, does the interdepartmental committee consider and make recommendations on matters relating to coastal development?