

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would spoil the proviso altogether if Resolution C were added to it. If local option had been in force in Southern Cross 12 months ago there was little doubt that reduction would have been carried there, and at Kanowna also if a poll had been taken there very probably "no license" would have been carried; and yet there were possibilities in all that country of new fields opening up within a few miles. It would be just as fatal to add Resolution C as to strike out Resolution D altogether.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: The only licenses proposed to be submitted to a local option poll were the publicans' general license, the hotel license, the wayside house license, and the Australian wine and beer license. The gallon license was exempted from the local option poll, and the result would be that though other licenses might be decreased gallon licenses would be taken out in every second street.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

*That progress be reported.*

As another place had sat all night and the *Hansard* staff were about exhausted, it would be an act of consideration to them if the House were not to sit in the evening.

Motion passed; progress reported.

*House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th December, 1910.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 7.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Papers re applications as to Wiluna Mining Leases 4J and 5J (ordered on motion by Mr. Holman).

## QUESTION — RAILWAY TRUCKS NOT AVAILABLE.

Mr. ANGWIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Has the Minister seen a report in to-night's *Daily News* stating that 30 or 40 men have had to cease work for want of railway trucks? Will the Minister see that the trucks are supplied so that the men may be kept employed?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I have not seen the report.

Mr. ANGWIN: Will the Minister look into the matter?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

## BILL — REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

*Second Reading.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson) in moving the second reading said: In presenting this Bill to the notice of hon. members I shall endeavour to confine my remarks within the briefest possible limits, consistent with a clear exposition of the subject, dealing mainly with the reasons for redistribution and the form which it is proposed the redistribution shall take. As regards the reasons, one has only to compare the electoral strength of the various constituencies to be convinced as to anomalies that exist as between electorates closely related in regard to interests and locality. It may be argued, and properly so, I am inclined to think, that the conditions prevailing in Western Australia at present are not yet such as to justify representation purely and absolutely on a population basis.

Mr. Scaddan: And never will be as long as you have control of the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Possibly that might be the case if the hon.

member were leading a Government. At any rate, I contend that the time has not yet come to have representation of that character, paying no heed to any other consideration; but though the time has not yet come in Western Australia for electorates equal, or practically equal, in voting strength, population being made the one determining factor, I submit there can be no valid reason advanced why inequalities of the most emphatic nature in respect to electoral strength should exist as between constituencies which in every other respect are identical in their characteristics. Take for example the Perth group of constituencies with a voting strength for the four seats of Perth, East Perth, North Perth and West Perth of some 19,300 electors. It would be difficult to find any reason to justify the retention of over 8,000 of these voters in one constituency, while another immediately adjoining has an electoral strength of only a little over 2,600. In the case of the Perth constituencies, whose present electoral strength is, Perth 2,663, East Perth 3,851, North Perth 8,437, and West Perth 4,353—in the case of this group of constituencies I contend there is clearly need for some readjustment of boundaries. Then, again, it is difficult to support the continuance of an electoral system which gives to the capital and the suburbs one member for every 4,400 electors, and to Fremantle, only 12 miles distant from the seat of Government, one member to every 2,750 electors. Then, again, take the compact Golden Mile electorates, all very similar in character. Why, it may be argued, should there be one constituency with over 5,000 voters, while the other three range from 2,200 to 3,500? Again, in the agricultural districts, we are faced with the anomaly of the Northam electorate with its 4,800 voters, while the immediately adjacent electorates of Toodyay and York have each a voting strength of a little over 2,000. Contradictions like these are of course to be expected while from a variety of causes the growth of population proceeds more rapidly in one locality than another; but I submit once such contradictions have become well established and are not merely of a tem-

porary or fluctuating character, it becomes necessary to provide for their removal by readjusting the boundaries of the electorates. While in the Bill I am now bringing before the notice of hon. members redistribution is effected on well-defined and consistent lines, let me at once admit that those who look for a Bill that is mathematically correct in every particular, one that achieves a theoretical perfection, will find themselves disappointed. The most I claim for this Bill is that it deals with practical difficulties in a practical fashion.

Mr. Scaddan: No, it does not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I claim that for it, and I leave the hon. members opposite later on, if they are able to do, to show it does not.

Mr. Angwin: Look at Roebourne to start with.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am coming to Roebourne in a few minutes. In deciding on the structure of the measure, the Government, although giving due weight to political theories, have refused to exalt these theories into the place of master, when their proper and appropriate mission is not to over-ride but to serve the essential needs of the community. If Western Australia were a State small in area, with a population distributed in almost equal proportions over its whole extent, redistribution would, in those circumstances, present no very serious difficulties. All that would be needed would be to decide as to the advisable number of electorates, and to divide the total number of electors by the number of seats. The task we have before us is a more complex one. While we should not shut our eyes to the claims of population, neither can we, I contend, with a State like ours, afford to exclude from consideration the requirements of industrial or commercial interests, or refuse to give adequate voice and voting power to localities at present but scantily populated but possessing vast potentialities of expansion and progress, provided that public money is legitimately and wisely expended in the development of their latent wealth. The principal work of the Western Australian Parliament is, and must be for very many years to come, the open-

ing up of our vast territory and generally turning its resources to their best account; and the accomplishment of that aim must inevitably be influenced to a very considerable degree, at any rate, by the nature of the representation in this Chamber. If, for example, we were to allow ourselves to be dominated exclusively by the doctrine of representation on a population basis, an altogether disproportionate number of constituencies would be allotted to the metropolis and districts immediately adjacent to it. But while guarding against those evils of centralisation, which might be expected to follow on the adoption in its entirety of the numerical basis of representation, it is also necessary to extend adequate recognition to those larger centres of population which, by reason of their superiority in point of numbers, are assuredly entitled to exercise a very strong and direct influence upon the course of public affairs and the carrying out of public policies. Therefore, it is evident that if anyone starts out to frame a measure of electoral representation designed both to conserve and advance the varied interests into which this great State is divided, and designed also to secure the free play and competition of those interests, a free play and competition which, I submit, is essential to the progress of a community like ours—if anyone starts out to frame a Bill of this character it is essential that the Bill framed must be to a large extent in the nature of a compromise. To endeavour to evolve a satisfactory Bill by paying regard to one only among the different factors that must be taken into account would be to court failure, if not disaster. An effort should be made, I contend, to maintain political equipoise between the interests which go to the making of commercial and industrial Western Australia, and also to preserve, as far as possible, an essential character in constituencies so that they may, generally speaking, fall into one or other of certain well-defined classes, for example, urban, mining, agricultural, pastoral or timber. If the balance of political power is to be maintained in Western Australia, neither leaning too much in one direction nor in another, it is obvious that the consti-

ties must be divided into different classes, each class having an electoral quota governed by and based on, not only the character of the interests sought to be represented, but also on the distribution of the population in the constituency, proximity to or remoteness from the seat of Government, and any other characteristic which may be regarded as giving to a constituency, or to a group of constituencies, special claims for consideration. As regards the last qualification, I may at once illustrate what I mean by referring to the constituencies lying to the north of the Murchison River, namely, Gascoyne, Roebourne, Pilbara, and Kimberley. These embrace in area by far the larger portion of Western Australia, a portion of necessity developed and peopled, as yet, only to the most limited degree. On a population basis that vast extent of country would not be entitled to more than two members at the most. But in this Bill we do not propose to interfere with the existing representation of our great north-western territory. Recognising its vast potentialities, and the enormous area over which its very scattered population is extended, we consider that it is in the interests of Western Australia as a whole, that this large but very partially developed portion of the State should have such representation in the Legislature as will enable its requirements to be adequately voiced and regarded. We have, therefore, for the special reasons mentioned, disregarded the population basis and maintained the existing constituencies, with some slight alterations, the principal effect of which is to raise the quota for the Roebourne electorate from 500 to 700. In order to effect this, that portion of the present Gascoyne constituency lying to the north of the Tropic of Capricorn has been added to Roebourne, and also that portion of the present Pilbara electorate situated to the west of the Yule River. With these slight exceptions, the existing boundaries of the far northern constituencies remain as at the present. The Gascoyne, Kimberley, and Pilbara, with a strength of 1,400, 1,600 and 1,200 respectively, show only a nominal variation of their existing electoral strength. It may therefore be said that,

to all intents and purposes, the North-West is excluded from the redistribution. I could have wished that it had been practicable to have further extended the Roebourne constituency so as to give it a greater number of electors. Owing, however, to the very fragmentary distribution of population in the North-West, this could not have been done without very largely increasing the area of the electorate, and including in it districts that have little or no community of interest with Roebourne and the country in its vicinity. It has, therefore, after mature consideration, been decided to make no substantial change so far as these northern constituencies are concerned. The remainder of the State is divided into nine classes of constituencies, metropolitan pure and simple, metropolitan suburban, Fremantle, small but thickly populated mining centres, thinly populated mining districts, the more thickly populated agricultural districts, thinly populated agricultural districts, out-ports, and one timber and one coal mining constituency as at present. The constituencies with the largest number of votes will be those actually in the capital, and therefore, closest to the seat of Government. The four Perth constituencies contain at present some 19,300 voters, divided as follows:—Perth, 2,663; East Perth, 3,851; North Perth, 8,437, and West Perth, 4,353. As provided in the present Bill, the total number of electors will be reduced to some 18,000, the 1,300 taken off being added to the metropolitan suburban electorates. The 18,000 electors in the metropolis will be divided almost equally among the four Perth seats, the approximate figures being Perth, 4,500 electors; East Perth, 4,500; North Perth, 4,600; and West Perth, 4,400. To secure this equalisation of voting power it has been necessary to make some re-adjustment in the boundaries of these four constituencies. The Perth electorate has been considerably enlarged, there having been added to it all that portion of the present East Perth district between Lord-street to the east, Newcastle-street to the north, Stirling, James, and Beaufort-streets to the west, and Wellington-street to the south. A portion of North

Perth has also been included, namely, that part bounded by Stirling-street to the east, Newcastle-street to the North, Palmerston-street and Russell-square to the west, and James-street to the south. West Perth undergoes no alteration, the boundaries remaining as at present. While a portion of the existing East Perth electorate has been added to Perth, as already described, the western boundary has been extended to Beaufort-street, and the northern boundary will run along the north-eastern boundary of Location Z. North Perth, as amended, is bounded to the east by Beaufort-street, to the south by Newcastle-street, to the west by Loftus-street, Vincent, Norfolk and Robinson-streets, and to the north by the north-eastern boundary of Location Z. That portion within the boundaries of Vincent, Loftus, Newcastle and Fitzgerald-streets has been taken from the present Balkatta electorate. In addition to the area removed from North Perth to the Perth electorate, outlying parts of the North Perth electorate have been added to Canning, Guildford, and Leederville (late Balkatta). We provide for five metropolitan suburban constituencies as at present, namely, Balkatta (to which we give the name of Leederville, as a more appropriate designation), Canning, Claremont, Guildford, and Subiaco. In these constituencies there are now some 20,300 electors divided as follows:—Balkatta or Leederville, 3,540; Canning, 3,064; Claremont, 4,331; Guildford, 3,963; Subiaco, 5,440. The boundaries as re-adjusted will give to Leederville, 4,100 voters; to Canning, 4,200; Claremont, 4,250; Guildford, 4,500; and Subiaco, 4,450. It will be seen therefore, that as far as the metropolitan suburban electorates are concerned they have an almost identical quota, the quota in the case of suburban constituencies being slightly lower than for the adjoining metropolitan district. To come to the details of those suburban constituencies, the present Leederville electorate will comprise the whole of the present Balkatta constituency, except that portion bounded by Vincent, Loftus, Newcastle and Fitzgerald-streets, which, being a portion of the municipality of Perth, has been added to the North Perth electorate.

On the other hand, a portion of the old North Perth district, comprising an area bounded on the south by Vincent-street, on the east by Norfolk-street, Robinson-street and West Guildford-road; on the north by the north-eastern boundary of Location Y, and on the west by the present boundary of the North Perth electoral district, has been added to Leederville, and it has also been given that portion of the present Subiaco electoral district situate outside the municipal boundary of Subiaco. The Subiaco electorate will be almost identical with the present electorate of that name, except that it has had added the eastern portion of Claremont containing Nedlands and Crawley and that, as already indicated, the portion between the Subiaco municipality and the sea has been added to Leederville. Except for the small area on its eastern boundary added to Subiaco, Claremont remains unchanged. Canning also remains as at present, except for the addition of part of the existing North Perth electorate, namely, that portion of Location Y situated between the West Guildford-road and the Swan river, and portion of the present East Fremantle district east of North Lake-road, north of Road No. 1773 and west of the Canning river, which is now included in the North-East Fremantle district. Guildford has had taken from it that portion lying to the east of Brookman-road, comprising, generally speaking, the eastern agricultural portion of the present electorate, and it has had added to it that portion of the present North Perth district comprised within the boundaries of the Bayswater roads board district. I now come to the Fremantle electorates. These, I may say, provide one of the problems of redistribution. At the present time it can scarcely be disputed that, in proportion to the number of electors, Fremantle is over-represented. Its 11,000 voters are divided into four electorates, whose voting strength is as follows:—Fremantle, 2,467; East Fremantle, 2,950; North Fremantle, 1,721; South Fremantle, 3,868. To give to the Fremantle constituencies precisely the same quota as is allotted to the metropoli-

tan and metropolitan-suburban constituencies, it would be necessary to take the whole of the districts extending from Midland Junction to South Fremantle, and divide the total of the electors by the number of seats, and then to readjust the boundaries without regard to conflicting local interests. But in this Bill, as I have already pointed out, while we do not disregard the factor of population, we endeavour as far as possible to retain an essential character in individual constituencies, and, wherever we can, in adjusting boundaries, not to ignore existing community of interest. It is clear, however, that the four Fremantle electorates, in close touch with the seat of Government, cannot, with any degree of equity, continue to have one representative to every 2,750 electors, while immediately adjoining constituencies have a quota of from 4,000 to 4,500. There must be a reduction. If we had reduced the Fremantle representation by one-half, the quota would be made unduly high, being one member to 5,500 voters, about 990 higher than the numerically largest of the Perth constituencies. We have, therefore, contented ourselves by depriving Fremantle of only one seat. Even then, as compared with the Perth suburban seats, Fremantle will be in the position of having one member for every 3,500 electors, as against Perth suburban constituencies of one member for every 4,300 voters. To that extent, therefore, Fremantle has an advantage with its quota of some 500 voters. We must all admit that the operation of political surgery involved in reducing representation is not under any circumstances a pleasing one, and it may be well argued that when that operation does become necessary a moderate rather than an extreme course should be adopted. That is the decision to which the Government have come in regard to Fremantle. In arriving at it we have been influenced by our recognition of the vastly important maritime and commercial interests centred in Fremantle, and also by the fact that we have every reason to suppose that industrially Fremantle will experience a considerable degree of expansion

within the next few years. Indeed, she has already enjoyed this experience in the erection of manufactories—I refer more particularly to the phosphate works at North Fremantle—and I think we may assume that that expansion will be very considerable within the next few years.

Mr. Bolton: So much so, in fact, that there is no justification for the reduction of representation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not say that for one moment, but so much so as to make it inexpedient to subject her representation in this Chamber to anything like a sweeping reduction. However we must make a reduction, because although it is true there will be some expansion in the population of Fremantle, yet on the other hand, we cannot suppose that Perth and the Perth suburban electorates are going to stand entirely still as regards their population; and they already have a very considerable start in population over the Fremantle constituencies. The three Fremantle constituencies will be Fremantle with a quota of 3,900 voters, North-East Fremantle with a quota of 3,800 voters, and South Fremantle with a quota of 3,800 votes. There, also, we have endeavoured to maintain, as far as possible, an equal quota so far as the Fremantle electors are concerned, although we have had to favour Fremantle to some extent as compared with Perth and the Perth suburban constituencies.

Mr. Angwin: A great deal more than the difference shown in the number of voters.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am afraid every constituency will make that claim; but on trial it will be found that there is not such a discrepancy as the hon. member may imagine. Fremantle proper will contain the whole of the existing district with the addition of that portion of the present East Fremantle district bounded on the East by East-street, on the South by Ellen, Parry, and Edward Streets, and on the West by the harbour. That portion of the present South Fremantle district bounded on the North by Suffolk-street, South Terrace, Alma-street, Hampton road, and Stephen-street, on

the East by Mary-street, on the South by Hampton-street and Howard-street, and on the West by the sea has also been added to the Fremantle electorate. While South Fremantle has had taken from it the portion just described, it has added to it that portion of the present Murray electorate situated to the north of the northern boundary of Location 16 (Peel estate). The new constituency of North-East Fremantle is made up of the present electoral districts of North Fremantle and East Fremantle, with the exception of that portion of East Fremantle which, as already mentioned, has been added to the Fremantle electorate. I next come to the Golden Mile constituencies. To this group we give the next largest quota of voters, after those in the metropolitan area. In these, as in the Perth electorate, the population is closely massed together, and its interests are more homogeneous than those of a constituency large in area but with limited population, and with its electors divided into scattered and widely separated groups and not bound together in an equal degree with a close community of interests. It will, perhaps, be argued that these Golden Mile electorates being relatively remote from the capital are entitled to a considerably lower quota of electors than are those constituencies which in themselves form the capital. But we have in a Bill of this kind not only to take into account the position as it is to-day, but to look some little distance, at any rate, into the future. While in relation to their distance from the capital the Golden Mile electorates may seem to have been allotted a quota somewhat too high or, to put it conversely, the metropolitan electorates may seem to have been allotted too low a quota as contrasted with that of the Golden Mile group, it has also to be remembered that in and around the capital the population is rapidly increasing, while on the gold-fields, except in a few localities, the general tendency, unfortunately, is for the population to decrease rather than to increase, or at least to do little more than hold its own.

Mr. Collier: Not in Kalgoorlie and Boulder.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Even in Kalgoorlie and Boulder the increase is nothing like so much as it is in the Perth group of electorates. While it is true that a sudden upward movement in the gold-mining industry, such for instance as that for which the Bullfinch find is responsible, bringing with it considerable additions to the population is always a possibility to be hoped for, yet the experience of the last few years goes far to confirm the view that despite the amelioration in the conditions of living, brought about partly by the increase of railway facilities and partly by the provision of an abundant water supply, the tendency is for many people not to make their permanent homes in the goldfields centres, but to regard them as places rather of temporary sojourn from which they hope to remove themselves to more attractive residential localities as soon as they have saved sufficient for the purpose.

Mr. Scaddan: That is pure assumption.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is an assumption we see illustrated every day, and it is illustrated even in the House among hon. members opposite representing gold-mining districts, but who, notwithstanding this, are removing into the agricultural districts and embarking on farming pursuits. Of course I admit that like all generalisations this one is not without exceptions, but despite the exceptions the contention will still hold good that so far as it is possible to forecast the immediate future, the electoral quota will tend to increase more rapidly in the metropolitan than in the Golden Mile constituencies. At present Kalgoorlie and the Golden Mile have five seats representing 17,000 electors, or an average of 3,400 divided as follows:—Kalgoorlie, 3,584; Boulder, 3,425; Hannans, 5,227; Brown Hill, 2,511, and Ivanhoe, 2,241. We propose to reduce these five seats by one, amalgamating Brown Hill and Ivanhoe.

Mr. Collier: You are determined to get one of the leaders.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The distribution of the electoral power will then be:—Kalgoorlie 4,250 electors,

Boulder 4,300 electors, Hannans 4,200 electors, and Ivanhoe-Brown Hill 4,250 electors. As reconstructed the Kalgoorlie electorate will include that portion of the municipality of Kalgoorlie situated to the North-West of the present electoral boundary, and also that portion of the municipality situated to the West of the present electoral boundary. The Boulder electorate we have extended by adding to it that portion of the Boulder municipality situated to the West, North, and East of the present Boulder electoral boundary, and also that portion of the Boulder municipality situated between Hopkins-street and Vivian-street. The amalgamated Brown Hill-Ivanhoe constituency is extended by adding to it portion of Hannans electoral district, the Southern boundary line being the railway line to Kamballie and the road from Kamballie railway station to Lake View townsite. Hannans electorate will contain the balance of the area North of North-East Coolgardie goldfield situated outside the boundaries of Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Brown Hill-Ivanhoe electorates. Under the existing distribution of seats there is no effort discernible to establish relative quotas for mining and agricultural constituencies. As hon. members have already gathered from the figures I have quoted, anomalies are rather the rule than the exception. In this Bill, on the contrary, we proceed on clear and well defined principles. It may I think justifiably be contended that thinly populated and scattered mining constituencies, usually large in area, are entitled to be given a lower quota than compact constituencies like those of the Golden Mile, small in area, but with a large number of voters. But between the scattered mining constituency and the ordinary agricultural constituency there is this broad distinction: that in the scattered mining constituency, though there may be many groups of voters, each group is for the most part of a compact nature easily adapted for organisation, and with but little difficulty in making its voice heard. In the purely agricultural districts, on the contrary, the voters are to be found for the most part on widely scattered farms; they exercise their fran-

chise under some personal inconvenience, having to travel long distances, while the scattered nature of their holdings makes it very difficult for them to combine effectively and unitedly voice their political aspirations. These drawbacks, I contend, entitle the agricultural constituencies to somewhat more favourable treatment in regard to the quota than the thinly populated mining constituencies. There is the further consideration that in Western Australia, under existing conditions, in almost every agricultural constituency, owing to the rate at which agricultural settlement is proceeding, the number of voters will be very materially increased year by year, while in the mining districts, unfortunately, during the last few years the tendency has been for the population to decrease, and in some instances very materially.

Mr. Scaddan: Why then, does the Minister for Mines boast about his developmental policy?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are the figures—it is unfortunate and I have to deplore it, but I have to give the facts. So far as it is possible to gauge the future, it seems probable that if now the agricultural constituencies start with a quota somewhat below that of the mining districts, other than those of the Golden Mile, the discrepancy is one that will be removed within a very short time; and it is not by any means impossible that within a few years, on the proposed redistribution, the quota of the agricultural constituencies will be higher than that of the mining districts. Excluding Kalgoorlie and the Golden Mile we have at present on the Eastern and Murchison fields ten gold mining constituencies containing 20,000 electors, the average quota being, therefore, 2,000 electors to each seat. Of these electorates Mount Magnet contains the largest number of voters, namely, 2,546, and Coolgardie the smallest namely, 1,557. It is proposed to reduce these ten seats by one, giving to the nine seats that will then remain an average quota of 2,250. The Dundas electorate will disappear, a portion of it being merged in Yilgarn and another portion in Kanowna. The electoral strength of each

of the nine districts will be as follows:—Coolgardie, 2,450, as against 1,557 at present; Kanowna, 2,400, now 1,628; Menzies, 2,300, now 2,460; Mount Leonora, 2,300, now 2,614; Mount Margaret, 2,125, now 1,600; Yilgarn, 1,975, now 2,214; Cue, 2,175, now 1,943; Mt. Magnet, 2,400, now 2,546; Murchison, 2,150, now 2,144. The reason why the quota of Yilgarn is kept low, as hon. members will readily conjecture, is that we have deemed it advisable to make as much allowance as possible for the expansion of the population on the Yilgarn fields, caused by the Bullfinch discovery. We have therefore kept this quota down below 2,000 and if it had been possible I would have preferred to have made it somewhat lower. The new Yilgarn district will consist of the western portion of the present Yilgarn, with the exception of a portion along the eastern railway, about 20 miles to the North and South of the railway, containing Carabin, Yerbillon, and Bodallin, which has been included in the Avon Agricultural Electoral district, and contains also the western portion of the present Dundas electorate. The eastern portion of the present Yilgarn district, eastward of a point between Bronti and Yellowdine railway stations has been attached to the new Coolgardie district.

Mr. Hudson: Is that a mining district which you have added on?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In addition to the present Coolgardie electoral district, Coolgardie district will also contain the eastern portion of the present Yilgarn electorate as far south as the extension of the southern boundary of the Hannans electoral district, to a point situate north of Sunday Soak and southward to a point situate west of 50 Mile Soak, thence westward and north-westward to the eastern railway between Bronti and Yellowdine, and thence north-east and north: and it will include also that portion of the present Menzies electorate to the south of the southern boundary of the North Coolgardie goldfield. The Kanowna district will contain the present electorate except that portion constituting the Broad Arrow goldfield. It will also have added to it that portion of the Yilgarn electorate



which is not included in the new Coolgardie district, and that portion of the present Dundas district not included in the new Yilgarn district. Menzies will contain the central portion of the present electorate and the Broad Arrow goldfield, taken from Kanowna. The present area of the Mount Margaret electoral district is extended under the redistribution by adding to it the Niagara goldfields district, and the districts of Yerilla, Yarri, Ejudina, Pingin, and Linden, all taken from the present Menzies electorate, and the districts of Murrin Murrin, Anaconda, and Mertondale, taken from the present electorate of Mount Leonora. The Mount Leonora electorate will consist of the central portion of the present district with the addition of Mount Ida taken from the Menzies electorate. As already mentioned, the Murrin Murrin, Anaconda, and Mertondale districts are transferred from Mount Leonora to Mount Margaret. The northern portion of the present Mount Leonora district, north of a line running due east from the south-eastern corner of the present Cue district, has been added partly to the Cue and partly to the Murchison electoral districts.

Mr. Holman: Why did you not give me some area up there?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: From the present Mount Magnet electorate has been taken the portion westward of the number 2 and number 3 rabbit-proof fences which has been added to the Irwin and Greenough electorates. Otherwise the Mount Magnet electorate remains unchanged. Cue, as already mentioned, has had added to it part of the northern portion of the present Mount Leonora electorate, and the balance of the northern portion taken from Mount Leonora goes to Murchison. The boundaries of the Cue and Murchison electorates are not otherwise changed. To the purely agricultural districts exclusive of the town of Northam and surroundings are allotted fifteen seats, four belonging to the South-West, two comprising the country served by the Midland Railway; Greenough, embracing the agricultural and pastoral country around Geraldton, and the remainder being divided among the large wheat-growing areas served by the Great

Southern and Eastern railways. The construction of spur railways and the consequent opening up of new wheat country must inevitably make their influence felt upon representation, and the first instalment of the effect is to be found in this Bill. The two seats taken from the goldfields, and the one seat from the South-West all go to the wheat areas, and in addition one additional seat has been allotted to the country served by the Midland Railway. It is more than probable that ultimately the South-West will be more closely settled than the wheat belts, but for the present, following the usual course of agricultural development in new countries, wheat farming is the principal magnet of attraction, and is drawing to it the larger population. One of the constituencies that might be included in the agricultural class, I refer to Northam, may almost be regarded as of an urban type, but its interests will continue to be bound up with those of agriculture. In the eastern and great Southern districts the agricultural electorates will have an average quota, if Northam be included, of 2,000, or if Northam be excluded, of 1,950. In the south-western districts the average will be 1,900 and in the agricultural country extending north of Guildford to the Murchison River, 1,500. The vast extent of country served by the Midland Railway has, as compared with the great southern and eastern districts, undoubtedly suffered from the fact that it has not enjoyed the benefits of a State-owned railway, and that so much of its land has been alienated from the State under the land grant system of railway construction. Had the Midland Railway and its accompanying land been repurchased by the State some years ago when Parliament had an opportunity of doing that, as was done in the case of the Great Southern Railway, it cannot be doubted that the progress of our Midland agricultural areas would have been in every particular as marked as the progress throughout the wheat lands of the Great Southern and Eastern districts. As it is, under the stimulus of a more progressive policy, the settlement of the Midland Company's lands is now being accomplished with gratifying results. To divide the Mid-

land and northern agricultural districts into only two electorates would have given them a quota considerably higher than that of the other agricultural electorates and would, so far as interests and area are concerned, have left them very much under-represented. But for the superiority in population, the claim of the great southern and eastern districts to eight agricultural seats, as against three allotted the Midlands, could not with any degree of equity be supported. But population, while not the only factor, is one that must necessarily carry weight. Describing the agricultural constituencies in detail, as proposed in the Bill, the Murray district, which now contains 1,140 voters, will have added to it that portion of the present Wellington district situated to the north of the Mornington Road. This will more than counterbalance the loss of electoral strength caused by adding the northern portion of the South Fremantle, the electorate as reconstituted containing some 1,700 voters as against 1,100 formerly. The Swan district as reconstituted will be more aptly entitled to the name Darling Range. It will consist practically of that portion of the present Swan district situated to the south of the Guildford-Newcastle road. The portion of the present Guildford electorate comprising its eastern agricultural part has been added to the Swan, while all the portion of the existing electorate situated to the north of the Guildford-Newcastle road has been eliminated for inclusion in another district, to be known as the Moore, along the Midland line.

Mr. Scaddan: You are not re-naming the Swan electorate Darling Range, are you?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have not re-named the electorate. I think it would be appropriate. As a matter of fact I do not think there is any portion of the Swan river in the new electorate. It will contain 2,100 voters as against 2,800 at present. The Sussex electorate has been raised from a strength of 1,500 electors to 1,900. I think hon. members opposite should be pleased at this. We endeavour, where we can, to raise the quota of agricultural constituencies, and we have done it in this case, having regard to the vast

importance of the agricultural interests, by adding to Sussex that portion of the present Collie district comprising the localities of Donnybrook, Brookhampton, and Preston, and that portion of the present Wellington electorate situated to the south of Boyanup.

Mr. Scaddan: It is a pure piece of gerrymandering, never equalled in Australia.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion and to endeavour to prove it, but I think that will be a more difficult matter than indulging in bald assertion. On the other hand we have taken from the Sussex electorate the south-eastern and southern portions, which have been added to the present Collie district. It is consistent with the principle we have followed, the effect of the alteration being to make Sussex purely an agricultural constituency. We do not want to have conflicting interests in the one electorate where, perhaps, they are about evenly balanced, one-half being agricultural interests and the other half say, timber interests, with one of those interests entirely unrepresented, or, at any rate, not securing the kind of representation it may desire. Nelson, we leave very much as at present, except that a small portion of the Greenbushes locality being used for timber purposes has been added to Collie—carrying out the same principle—and a part of Collie south of a line running due west from Moodiarrup bridge, being of an agricultural nature, has been added to Nelson. As reconstituted it will contain 2,100 electors as against its present number of about 2,200. Coming to the Eastern and Great Southern districts—

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What about Collie?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will come to Collie later on. I am dealing with the agricultural districts first. Later on I will deal with the timber and coal mining districts. Coming to the Eastern and Great Southern districts, these, if Northam town is included, are divided into nine electorates with a total enrolment of about 18,000. In defining their boundaries it has been considered that some slight variation in electoral strength is of less importance than community of interest;

and, therefore, the boundaries of the new districts have been drawn with the object of embracing those portions of the country east and west of the Great Southern Railway which would appear to be more closely connected with the principal centres along that line on account of the spur lines running east and west. In place of the three existing electorates, Katanning, Williams, and Beverley, there will be five, namely, Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin, Pingelly, and Beverley, with an average electoral strength for each district of about 1,900 voters. Coming more to detail, Katanning retains its southern boundary, except that the portion between the Gordon river and the Pallinup river has been more closely defined, as has also the extension eastward to the boundary of the present Dundas district. On its northern side Woodauilling has been eliminated and the northern portion of the present Katanning district east and west. The new constituency of Wagin is formed of portion of the present Katanning and Williams electorates, its boundary to the north-west being the Arthur river and Arthur river flats, and the continuation of the boundary eastward being practically the boundary of the Wagin Land District. The new Narrogin electorate is substantially the central portion of the present Williams electorate. The southern portion of the latter has, as already indicated, been included in the Wagin electorate. To form the Pingelly electorate, the northern portion has been taken from the existing Williams electorate, eastward of the northern portion of the Wickepin Agricultural Area, westward including the Popanyinning district and a strip of country south of the Holham river. This electorate extends to the north so as to include the Mourambine Agricultural Area, and Brookton townsite. Beverley will contain the whole of the present Beverley district not included in the new district of Pingelly. York remains as at present, except that the northern boundary has been somewhat amended in order to make it more definite. The present Northam electorate, containing some 4,800 voters, is divided into two. The town and a tract of country surrounding it between Grass Valley in the east, Viveash causeway in

the west, Cartmilligan in the north, and the present Northam electoral boundary in the south, will comprise the new Northam electorate, containing approximately 2,800 voters. The other portion, to which it is proposed to give the name of Avon, will consist of the present Northam electorate situated to the east of Grass Valley, and the small portion of the present Yilgaru district before mentioned, and will contain approximately 2,000 electors. Some alterations have to be made in the Toodyay electorate. A portion on the westward has been added to the new Moore electorate. A tract of country between Werribee in the west, and Mokine in the east, and also that portion surrounding the Northam-Goomalling Railway north of Burke's siding, both of which are at present in the Northam electorate, have been added to Toodyay; and the boundary between the Avon and the Toodyay electorates has been more closely defined. The new Moore electorate will comprise that portion of the present Swan electorate situated to the north of the Guildford electorate and the Guildford-Newcastle road. It includes also the western and north-western portion of the present Toodyay electorate, embracing the localities of Wongan Hills and those districts recently opened up for agricultural purposes to the north of Goomalling and Dowerin. Its northern boundary will run east and west so as to include Moora townsite. Though in point of numbers this is at present a small electorate, containing approximately only 1,400 voters, the agricultural developments proceeding there are such as to ensure a rapid increase in its electoral strength. The Irwin district will contain the northern portion of the present Irwin electorate, not included in the Moore electorate. Greenough remains as at present, except that a strip of country lying to the north of the present Geraldton district and bounded by the Mount Erin estate on the east, and the localities of Moonyoonooka and Bootenal in the south and south-east have been added to Geraldton. Its boundaries have also be extended eastward to the No. 2 rabbit-proof fence and then further eastward along the No. 3 rabbit-proof fence to Sandford river.

Mr. Troy: There is no community of interests there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Greenough is necessarily an agricultural and pastoral community.

Mr. Troy: You have brought in a few mining camps.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are endeavouring to make up a quota. We are faced with a low quota in the North, and portion has been taken off the Greenough quota and added to Geraldton, and portion taken off a mining constituency and added to Greenough electorate to increase its quota. I now come to coal mining and timber electorates. We have some change in the coal mining district of Collie, the net effect of which is to slightly reduce its present quota. At the present time there are in the Collie constituency some 3,000 electors. We reduce that number by 300, giving that electorate, under the new scheme, a quota of some 2,700. The Donnybrook, Preston, and Brookhampton districts have been taken from Collie and added to Sussex, and the eastern portion of the present Collie electorate has been divided between Nelson and two of the districts created along the Great Southern line. On the other hand, forest areas in the present Sussex electorate have been added to Collie, the general effect, as I have pointed out, being to preserve community of interest. The Government consider that community of interest is more closely related between the timber hewer and the coal miner, than between the timber hewer and the agriculturalist.

Mr. Troy: You are taking mining camps into your own district.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If I am that is unavoidable, I suppose. It is better to maintain community interest if it can be maintained, but I have pointed out the necessity in some instances to increase the quota. It only shows how baseless is the charge of hon. members opposite that the Government have indulged in gerrymandering if I have mining camps in my own district. The Forrest electorate is maintained in its entirety, giving it an electoral strength of about 2,900. I now come to the outports. As in the case of Fremantle, two of the outports, Geraldton and Bunbury, present

some difficulty. Albany, with 2,600 electors, has an adequate electoral strength, and its boundaries, therefore, remain unaltered. But Bunbury with a present electoral strength of 1,650 voters, and Geraldton with 1,800, fall below what may be regarded as the standard for this class of constituency. While it is desirable to maintain the dominant characteristic of these constituencies, that of shipping and mercantile constituencies, it has been necessary to add to their voting strength; and to that extent we have been compelled to infringe on the doctrine of community of interests in the case of Bunbury. This has been effected by including that portion of the Wellington district situated between Monnington road in the north and Boyanup in the south, bringing its voting strength up to some 2,200 electors. The boundaries of Geraldton have been extended on the north, the south-east and south, raising its strength to about 2,000. So far as the Upper House provinces are concerned, such changes as are made are those which are necessitated by the change in the Lower House electoral districts. Thus the West Province will consist of the Fremantle, North-East Fremantle and South Fremantle electorates, instead of the four Fremantle electoral districts as at present, and the South-East Province, instead of consisting of Albany, Katanning and Williams electorates as at present, will consist of the Albany, Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin and Pingelly electorates. Except as is necessary by the alteration of electoral districts, the provinces are not interfered with. That concludes the description of the boundaries in detail. If we take the general features of the Bill we find that its general effect, so far as the loss or gain of seats in different parts of the State is concerned, is as follows:—The Eastern Goldfields lost two seats, Fremantle and the South-West lose one each, North and East Fremantle being amalgamated, and Wellington being absorbed by Murray, Bunbury and Sussex. The districts served by the Eastern and Midland Railways gain one seat each. Such described in detail is the nature of the redistribution. Its general effect, so far as the loss or gain of seats in different parts of the State is concerned, is as

follows:—The Eastern Goldfields lose two seats, Fremantle and the South-West lose one each, North and East Fremantle being amalgamated, and Wellington being absorbed by Murray, Bunbury and Sussex. The country served by the Great Southern Railway gains two seats and the Eastern and Midland districts gain one each; that is the general effect of the redistribution. The electoral strength of the different classes into which the various electorates have been divided has been based on one or more of the following considerations: Density of population, community of interest, area of electoral district, prospect of immediate increase or decrease in the population of the district; we are bound to look, to some extent, to the future, and if it is an absolute certainty that there will be an increase in the population as in the Yilgarn electorate, we are bound to endeavour to make our quota meet that increase. We have also taken into account the distance of districts from the seat of Government, and the facilities for inter-communication. Summarising the various classes into which the electorates are divided, we arrive at the following results:—We have four Perth seats with an average of 4,500 electors, five metropolitan suburban seats with an average of 4,300, four urban mining constituencies with an average of 4,250, three Fremantle seats with an average of 3,800, two seats representing coal mining and timber, with an average of 2,700, four representing outports and country towns with an average of 2,400, ten gold-mining constituencies (exclusive of the Golden Mile constituencies) with an average of 2,150 voters, twelve seats representing South-Western, Eastern and Great Southern agricultural districts with an average of 1,950; we have three seats representing Midland agricultural and pastoral districts with an average of 15,000 voters, and three seats representing purely Northern pastoral districts with an average of 1,250. It will be seen from that, that the quota ranges from 4,500 electors on the coast, the purely metropolitan constituencies, down to 1,250 in the far North. If we divide those constituencies as to interests we have 12 metro-

politan constituencies, including the Fremantle seats, 15 mining constituencies, and one timber electorate in which the representation is of an analogous character, and we have also 15 agricultural seats, and one country town, Northam, which though not agricultural is closely allied to agriculture; three seats representing the mercantile and shipping interests of the outports; and three seats representing the purely pastoral districts.

Mr. Foulkes: Do you include Busselton?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Busselton is in Sussex. The population of Busselton is not sufficiently large to justify it having a seat entirely to itself. It will be noted, that the two great industries of the country, mining and agriculture, are given equal representation, namely, 15 seats each. Assuming that the distribution in groups as provided for in the last redistribution of seats in 1905 is to be maintained, after making due allowance for the increase or decrease, as the case may be, of voting strength, the metropolitan area, in which I include the Fremantle electorates, is entitled to 12 members, and that is the number provided for in this Bill. The Golden Mile electorates on the same basis should lose one member, and that also, has been provided for, their representation in this Bill being four as against five at present. The other mining constituencies on this basis would only be entitled to eight members as against 11 at present, but, opposed as the Government are to sweeping changes, we have been content to make a reduction of only one. The purely agricultural districts, on the other hand, which at present have 13 members would be entitled on this basis to 17, whereas counting Northampton among the agricultural, we give them 16. I mention this circumstance in order to anticipate the objection which will possibly be advanced against this Bill, that it unduly favours the agricultural constituencies. As a matter of fact, as compared with the last redistribution, the converse holds good, because instead of giving the agricultural constituencies the 17 seats which might be claimed as their due, we content ourselves by increasing the number by only two,

or if Northam be included, by three. The fluctuations in electoral strength in different constituencies, since 1905, are somewhat striking.

Mr. Bolton: There was no redistribution in 1905; it was in 1903.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My comparison, then, is more favourable to hon. members opposite. On the goldfields, excluding the Golden Mile, since 1905 the voting strength has decreased by 23 per cent., or including the Golden Mile by 19 per cent. In the agricultural districts on the contrary the voting strength has been increased by 46 per cent. While on the goldfields the electoral population has decreased, in round numbers by 6,000, in the agricultural districts it has increased by 10,000. That is the salient outstanding feature of the electoral position as it exists to-day, namely, that there are on the goldfields 6,000 less voters and in the agricultural districts 10,000 more voters than there were in 1905. For their decrease of 6,000 voters the goldfields lose two members, while for their increase of 10,000 the agricultural districts in which I include the urban district of Northam, gain three members. In other words, the redistribution of seats, as between the goldfields and the agricultural districts, follows as closely as is possible the transference of voting strength from one to the other. An objection that may possibly be advanced in some quarters against this scheme of redistribution, is that it does not sufficiently reflect the increase in the voting strength of the metropolitan area. In that portion of the State the voters have increased since 1905 by 8,000, but no increase is given in the number of members, which for Perth and suburbs remains as at present. On the strict ground of representation on a population basis, the capital and suburbs would be at least entitled to an additional member. But, as I have pointed out in an earlier portion of my remarks, there are other considerations than numerical strength to be taken into account. The metropolitan electorates enjoy the immense advantage of being in the closest possible touch with the seat and centre of Government, and it cannot, I think, be contended that

the comparatively small metropolitan area, extending from Midland Junction to Fremantle, is really under-represented when in a House of 50 members it commands no less than 12 votes, or nearly a quarter of the whole. To make a comparison with the Mother country, if the metropolitan area of London were given a similar representation, it would have in the House of Commons something like 170 members.

Mr. Bath: But you forget that there are half a dozen metropolitan areas there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It has been the policy of this Government as far as possible to avoid the evil of centralisation, and in this Bill the policy is reflected. While we admit that due weight must be given to population there must be balances of electoral strength in the different parts of the State. I am not, of course, so sanguine as to suppose that a measure of this sort will escape hostile criticism. It is impossible to frame such a Bill in which some of the electorates are abolished and the boundaries are altered without arousing animosity, but what I do contend is that the more closely it is scrutinised the more it will be realised, if the examination be a fair and impartial one, that the Bill is not only an honest but also a successful attempt to give its fair share of representation to each of those interests and aspirations which united form the body politic of Western Australia. The redistribution shows undue favour to no interest and to no portion of the State. It is fair to every interest and every portion of the State alike. Its interference with some existing distributions of electoral strength must necessarily create some opposition—such is the inevitable consequence of change—but it remove anomalies and redresses glaring inequalities; and on those grounds it is, I submit, entitled to support both within this Chamber and in the electorates themselves. I beg to move—

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

On motion by Mr. SCADDAN debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9 p.m.*